THE WORLD IS AS SHARP AS A KNIFE

An Anthology in Honour of

WILSON DUFF

BC ✓
P705
D:W57
1981
c.3

BC
P705
D:W67
1981
c.3

THE WORLD IS AS SHARP AS A KNIFE

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY
VICTORIA, B.C.

Wilson Duff 1925-1976

THE WORLD IS AS SHARP AS A KNIFE

An Anthology in Honour of

WILSON DUFF

Donald N. Abbott
EDITOR

EDITORAL COMMITTEE
Marnie Duff
Marjorie Halpin
Robin Ridington
Hilary Stewart

1981

Published by the
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM
in association with the
DONORS FUND: FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Copyright © 1981 The British Columbia Provincial Museum
Victoria, British Columbia

Harold Hosford, B.C.P.M.
Managing Editor

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

The World is as sharp as a knife.

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-7718-8211-4

1. Indians of North America—British Columbia—Antiquities. 2. Indians of North America—British Columbia. 3. British Columbia—Antiquities. 4. Duff, Wilson, 1925-1976. I. Abbott, Donald N., 1935- II. Duff, Wilson, 1925-1976. III. Duff, Marnie. IV. British Columbia Provincial Museum.

E78.B9W66 971.1'00497 C80-092083-X

Published by the
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM
with assistance from the
DONORS FUND: FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Designed and printed in Canada by
MORRISS PRINTING COMPANY LTD.
Victoria, British Columbia

This book was published
with the financial support of the
Friends of the Provincial Museum

The medallion illustrated on the covers was designed and made by Bill Reid as a gift for Wilson Duff on his fiftieth birthday, 23 March, 1975. It is 3.7 cm in diameter. Courtesy of Marnie Duff. Photographs by Hilary Stewart.

Contents

Introduction—*Donald N. Abbott* 11

Prologue—*Bill Reid* 13

PEOPLE

A Note on the Contributions of Wilson Duff to Northwest Coast Ethnology and Art—*Michael M. Ames* 17

"A Grand Old Man at 35": Wilson Duff as Curator—*Diane MacEachern Barwick* 23

"People Need Friends, It Makes Their Minds Strong": A Coast Salish Curing Rite—*Michael and Della Kew* 29

Mungo Martin, Carver of the Century—*Wilson Duff* 37

Wilson Duff: He Used to Call Us Together—*Thomas, Emma and George Hunt* 41

Wilson Duff: A Tribute—*George Clutesi* 43

Some Thoughts about Wilson Duff—*Ron Hamilton* 45

Tribute of the Kitwancool—*Peter Williams* 47

Wilson Duff and Native Land Claims—*Thomas R. Berger* 49

The Changing Status of Haida Women: An Ethnohistorical and Life History Approach—*Margaret B. Blackman* 65

Sebassa's Men—*Donald H. Mitchell* 79

THINGS

Wilson Duff (1925-1976): His Contributions to the Growth of Archaeology In British Columbia—*Charles E. Borden* 89

Stone Clubs from the Skeena River Area—*Wilson Duff* 95

A "Hagwilget" Club from England—*Donald N. Abbott and Jonathan C. H. King* 105

Ninstints Notebook—*John H. Smyly* 107

Notes on the Thompson Winter Dwelling—*Andrea Laforet and Annie York* 115

Sea Levels and Archaeology on the Northwest Coast— *Wilson Duff* 123

Bedrock and Boulder Bowls—*Beth Hill* 127

Notes on the Iconography of the Haida Moon—*Alan L. Hoover* 143

The Killer Whale Copper—*Wilson Duff* 153

The Equation of Copper—*Martine de Widerspach-Thor* 157

Will the Real Charles Edensaw Please Stand Up?: The Problem of Attribution in Northwest Coast Indian Art—*Bill Holm* 175

Thoughts on the Nootka Canoe—*Wilson Duff* 201

IDEAS

The World is as Sharp as a Knife: Meaning in Northern Northwest Coast Art—*Wilson Duff* 209

Cosmic Equations in Northwest Coast Indian Art—*George F. MacDonald* 225

Trails of Meaning—*Robin Ridington* 239

Four Kwatiutl Themes on Isolation—*Susan Reid* 249

Trois Souvenirs de Wilson Duff—*C. Lévi-Strauss* 257

Three Memories of Wilson Duff—*C. Lévi-Strauss* translated by *Monique Layton* 259

Stone Mask Reunion—*Hilary Stewart* 261

For Wilson: As a Contribution to the Conversation—*Robin Ridington* 265

"Seeing" in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks—*Marjorie Halpin* 269

MESSAGES

COMMENTS ON COLOUR PLATES

Mungo Martin: Sea Grizzly Bear 291

Roy Vickers: Eagle—Full Circle 291

COLOUR PLATES

Sea Grizzly—*Mungo Martin* 292

Eagle—Full Circle—*Roy Vickers* 293

COMMENTS ON COLOUR PLATES

Bob Davidson: Mighty Mouse Lives 294

Tony Hunt: The Kwa-Gulth Housefront 294

Richard Hunt: Kwa-Gulth Man 294

COLOUR PLATES

"Mighty Mouse"—*Bob Davidson* 295

The Kwa-Gulth Housefront of my grandfather—*Tony Hunt* 296

Kwa-Gulth Man—*Richard Hunt* 298

Thunderbird and Killer Whale—*Henry Hunt* 299

The Box Painting by the "Master of the Black Field"—*Bill Reid* 300

COLOUR PLATES

Graphic rendering of all four sides of "The Box"—*Bill Reid* 303

Yahtshulthat—*Hupquatchew* 304

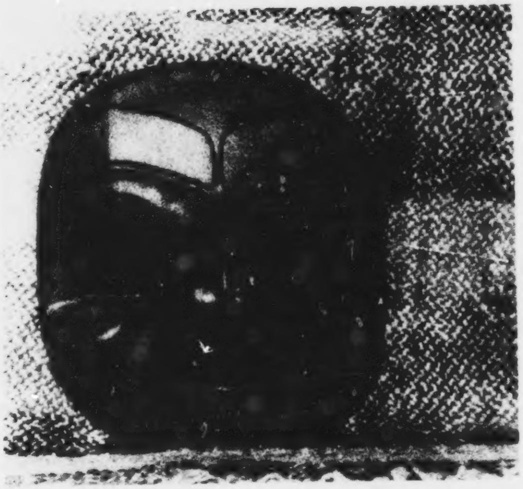
Poems by *Wilson Duff* 307
Nothing Comes Only in Pieces—*Wilson Duff* 315
Poems by *Collyne* 325
Poems by *Phyllis Webb* 339

Epilogue—*Dr. K. O. L. Burridge* 341
Acknowledgements 343

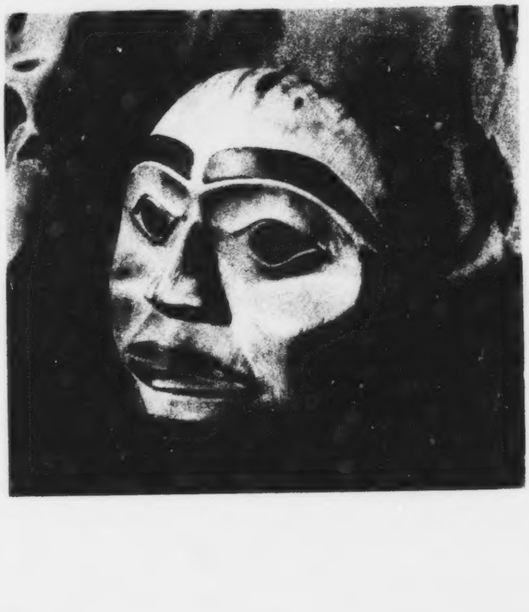
Introduction

Donald N. Abbott

ARCHAEOLOGY DIVISION
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM



Masks carved by Wilson Duff



This should be an unusual book because it is centred about an unusual man. It could have been, but obviously is not (or at least is only in part), a scholarly *Festschrift*. Wilson Duff was an original, productive, and meticulous scholar. His work stimulated and inspired many colleagues and students, some of whom have contributed papers to this volume.

The book might be, but I hope is not, devoted to praise of the man. Some of the contributions suggest the esteem in which he was held by a great many people, both for his character and for his ideas. However, this is a memorial, not idolatry. Wilson, all too conscious of his faults, would have disowned that and, anyway, hagiography is not well accepted these days.

As an alternative to pure scholarship, this volume might have attempted to be pure literature. Many of us, while appreciating the elegance of Duff's writing, even on prosaic themes, were unaware until after his death that he was also a closet poet and a very good one. Yet the revelation was not really surprising. Art, specifically the expression of meaning through art, was his passion. Inevitably he was impelled to produce as well as study it and, while he did try his hand at carving, the art of words came most naturally to him. Again, this facet of Wilson's genius has inspired some very fine responses in kind for this collection.

Of course the book could also very well have been oriented strictly toward the visual arts of the Northwest Coast. Contributors have much to say on this topic in which Wilson Duff was one of the handful of acknowledged experts in the world. It is graced with several original Northwest Coast Indian prints by some of his artist friends who are among the developers and foremost practitioners of this form.

Finally, it might have been appropriate to restrict the writing to philosophical, even mystical, themes, for clearly Wilson was engrossed during his latter years in a search for profound meanings and his attempts to communicate these ideas have produced enthusiastic and thoughtful responses.

But to have limited a Wilson Duff memorial volume to any one of these modes, while it might have resulted in a more orthodox anthology, would have missed the essence of the man. Wilson was fascinated with paradoxes and himself was comprised of them. This collection contains between its covers works which in any other context might keep very uncomfortable company with one another. But some were written by Wilson and each of the others was submitted as a tribute to his memory. Thus it contains science and art, history and poetry, fact and speculation, the concrete and the philosophic, intense thought and friendly remniscence, dogged research and intuitive revelation. Do not think of these as contradictory for all of them were aspects of Wilson Duff. They were some of the dynamic equations, the "armatures", of his mind; and so are they of this book.

There is a more traditional kind of unity here as well, however, and in this too Wilson's interests and this volume coincide. I am referring, of course, to the geographical-cultural restriction to topics related to the Indians of British Columbia and immediately adjacent areas. It is obviously a book for those interested in the cultures of Northwest America, but not only them. Wilson, far from feeling limited within these bounds, discovered among the Indian people here and their works a whole universe of thought. More, perhaps, than anyone else he has been responsible for revealing this universe to the rest of mankind. Between these covers Wilson Duff and some of those who have profited by his influence continue the revelation. Thus the book must be dedicated not only to Wilson but also to the native people of this area to whose creativity he felt indebted.

The contributions to this book fall naturally into four sections—People, Things, Ideas and Messages—consistent with Wilson Duff's major personal and scholarly preoccupations. There is a degree of chronological development implied in this organization since, while each of these themes was present throughout his productive career, they each achieved prominence at different stages.

His concern with people—friends, colleagues, the native Indian people (many of whom were also friends and colleagues) and their cultures—was basic and the first to be realized in his anthropological research and writing, *i.e.*, his Master's research and subsequent publication on the Upper Stalo. Throughout his life, people—real flesh and blood fallible people rather than ideals—remained Wilson's axis of reality. He had a deep respect for, confidence in, and compatability with Indian people in particular. This was evident in his everyday conversation and behaviour, in his teaching, and throughout his writings.

Things—artifacts and aspects of the environment—are an essential study of a museum anthropologist. In this Wilson, to use one of his own expressions, certainly paid his dues. Canoes, projectile points, stone bowls, masks, raw materials, sea levels, and innumerable other things he curated, thought about, measured, described, displayed and generally dealt with as appropriate with dedication and insight.

Ideas for Wilson arose naturally out of the contemplation of things and the people with whom they were associated. As his knowledge and professional confidence increased so too did the degree of abstraction and mental construction in which he dared allow himself to indulge. The process is dramatically revealed by comparing his 1956 publications on stone sculpture with his treatment of some of the same material two decades later in *Images Stone B.C.* The former comprise painstaking scholarly documentation from the analysis of which he derived important culture-historical implications. In the latter, however, the stones led him confidently far beyond considerations of distribution and style to reach into the very thought processes of the artists themselves, the cultures of which they had been a part, and into some fundamental observations on "how it is to be human" (Duff, 1975:26).

Finally, and deriving naturally from the ideas with which he was wrestling during his last years, came Wilson's attempts to communicate them through the less restrictive and more trenchant media of poetry and fiction. Paradoxically, in his lifetime these powerful "messages" were kept to himself and to a handful of intimates. By their posthumous publication here they will give a wider public some insight into Wilson's own insights.

Another mask carved by Wilson Duff

Prologue

Wilson Duff 1925-1976

Bill Reid

Reprinted from *Vanguard*, Vancouver Art Gallery
Vol. 5, No. 8; October 1976

Silver medal made by Bill Reid for Wilson Duff's fiftieth birthday

When Madeline *(Madeline Bronsdon, Curator, UBC Museum of Anthropology)* phoned and told me Wilson had died, here on the Charlottes[1] it seemed at first just another dismal small muffled electronic sound such as we hear through the background noise of our faulty radio and TV reception, echoes of an outside world where people seem to spend most of their time killing each other or themselves. It didn't seem surprising that it had happened to someone who was an old friend and colleague. Perhaps I'll have to return to Vancouver and the University to really feel the impact of his loss.

He was supposed to come here this year, to spend a couple of weeks with me after he finished conducting a tour around the Islands to show a boatload of people the deserted village sites. Too bad he didn't make it. If you can forget their tragic history, and overlook its results, there's a paradoxical tranquility about these beautiful stormy islands that might have kept him with us for a while.

He hadn't been to the Charlottes for about 20 years, and that's sort of strange, considering that his main interest centered on the art that originated here and the people who made it. But there may have been a good reason. I think he wanted his Charlottes to be the home of the old Haidas, when the totem poles were new and the great carvers were just finishing their latest boxes, masks, rattles and all the other gear and the painting was new and bright—not a largely deserted land with a few crumbling relics of rotten wood, and a handful of fishermen and loggers and their families occasionally remembering memories as they became more and more like the world that surrounds them.

I said he was my friend, and in a way this was true. We used to get together and drink a little and very often exchange long periods of rather uncomfortable silence. That was when we tried to discuss something other than Northwest coast art. He helped me out from time to time when I was suffering from the malady that eventually caused his death, and needed sympathetic company. I tried to do the same for him with little success.

So I guess I was his friend. But I think that certainly more than me, perhaps more than anybody, his true friends were Albert Edward and Charles Edenshaw, of Kiusta, Skidegate, Naikun and Massett, and all the great artists and, as he thought, philosophers of the great age of Northwest coast art. I think he really loved them, at first as creators of beautiful things, but later, as he tried to see through the curtain of age and cultural difference, as real people, who had lived vital, interesting lives, and through their works had something vital and interesting to say to him and to us. I wish I were romantic enough to believe he was now able to really talk to Albert Edward and his distinguished nephew, and find out definitely who made what and what it was all about. And perhaps exchange a few words with the Raven.

---

[1] 1st Trailer, 2nd Beach, Skidegate Inlet, Q.C.I., August 3, 1976.

Well, what about Wilson Duff, Professor of Anthropology? The most repeated remark is that he left a great deal undone. It's true he didn't write very much. He wanted to be a good writer, and he was, but it was terribly difficult for him, every word a hard birth after long labor.

But he was a good teacher and in his very low-keyed way, a powerful propagandist for the art of the Northwest coast people. Many wealthy dealers in primitive art in New York and London should pay tribute to the part he played in bringing this great treasure to the attention of the public and, much more important, a couple of generations of students owe their discovery of this rich heritage to his enthusiasm and knowledge.

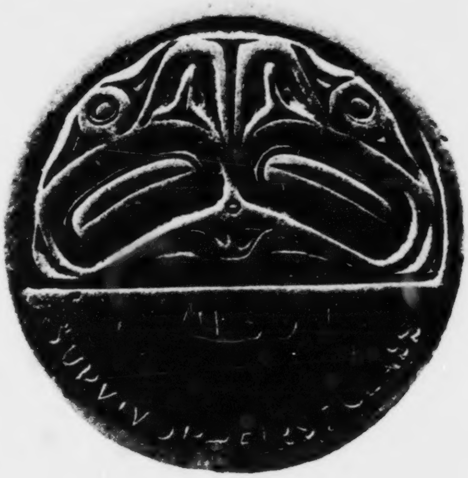
And equally as important, if there is truly a renaissance of native Northwest coast art, it is as much the accomplishment of a small group of dedicated academics, Hunter Lewis, Harry and Audrey Hawthorne, Bill Holm and others, as it is of the carvers themselves. And Wilson was certainly one of the foremost of these. For years he was the friend and advisor of Mungo Martin and later the Hunts in Victoria. He gave me my first opportunity to carve on a large scale, and became a friend and advocate of most of the younger artists. On behalf of all of us, I'd like to thank him for that.

A couple of years ago for his 50th birthday, partly as a joke, but with some serious intent, I made Wilson a silver medallion with a Haida design on the front, and some inscription on the back giving his name and the date and describing him as a "survivor, first class". I'm glad that he wore his survivor's medal quite proudly from then on. I suppose it's ironic if he were wearing it when he died, (he was: ed.), but in a larger sense, as long as people study, enjoy, enthuse about, and come to love Northwest coast art, at least some part of him *will* survive.

Wilson wrote as the final paragraph of the report of the salvage of the poles at Ninstints *(B.C. Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, 1957)*

> *Little remains of the thriving community known to Colnett and Duncan and Gray. The territories of the Kunghit People are more deserted now than they have been for many centuries past. A few fragments of memory, a few bright glimpses in the writings of the past, some old and weathered totem poles in a storage shed, and the mouldering remnants of once-magnificent carved posts and houses on the site of the old village—these are all that survive of the tribe and village of Chiefs Koyah and Ninstints. What was destroyed here was not just a few thousand individual human lives. Human beings must die anyway. It was something even more complex and even more human—a vigorous and functioning society, the product of just as long an evolution as our own, well suited to its environment and vital enough to participate in human cultural achievements not duplicated anywhere else. What was destroyed was one more bright tile in the complicated and wonderful mosaic of man's achievement on earth. Mankind is the loser. We are the losers.*

Well, one somewhat flawed, quixotic, sometimes naive, difficult, but very likeable, intelligent and somehow necessary tile is gone from our mosaic. We'll miss him. Kilslai!



PEOPLE

A Note on the Contributions of Wilson Duff to Northwest Coast Ethnology and Art

Michael M. Ames
MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Reprinted, with minor revisions, from *BC Studies*
No. 31; Autumn 1976

Wilson Duff, Professor of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and a leading Northwest Coast specialist, died August 8, 1976 in his fifty-second year. He was well known and widely respected for his work, both by professional scholars and by the British Columbia native peoples about whose history and cultural tradition he wrote and taught.

Duff spent his entire professional career on the Northwest Coast—a "home-grown anthropologist," he once described himself—moving freely between museums, universities and native Indian communities. He obtained a B.A. degree from the University of British Columbia in 1949 and a Master's degree in anthropology in 1951 from the University of Washington, under the direction of Dr. Erna Gunther. Associated with the British Columbia Provincial Museum as Curator of Anthropology from 1950 until 1965, Duff then accepted a teaching position in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of British Columbia. He pursued a successful career in teaching and research at the university until his death. His course on the Indians of British Columbia was one of the most popular ones offered by the department.

Duff played a pioneering role in the development of anthropology in British Columbia. Obtaining his baccalaureate only two years after the first anthropologist, Dr. Harry Hawthorn, was appointed to the faculty of the University of British Columbia, Duff was a founding member of the British Columbia Museums Association—one of the most active museum societies in Canada. He served as its vice-president from 1962 to 1963 and its president from 1963 to 1965. He chaired the provincial government's Archaeological Sites Advisory Board from 1960 to 1966, and served on the provincial government's Indian Advisory Committee from its inception in 1963. He also edited the Provincial Museum's important *Anthropology in British Columbia* series from 1950 to 1956.

Wilson Duff was proud to be a close friend of Indian peoples as well as a student of their history and culture, and he endeavoured to make his knowledge serve their interests as well as those of the museums and universities in which he worked. The "Indian point of view" was important to him. He served from 1960 as a consultant for the Kitwancool tribe, and was an expert witness in the Nishga land case before the British Columbia supreme court in 1969. He also convened and chaired a symposium on Ethics in Anthropological Fieldwork at the 1969 Northwestern Anthropology Conference, in which he and other participants expressed concern about the relations between anthropologists and those whom they studied. He was critical of anthropologists and museums.

Duff served on the joint British Columbia Provincial Museum and University of British Columbia Totem Pole Preservation Committee that in the 1950s purchased and salvaged some of the last remaining poles in the Queen Charlotte Islands. He surveyed totem poles of southwestern Alaska for the Alaska State Museum and the Smithsonian in 1969, and in 1971 directed a project to record Indian history of southeastern Alaska for the Alaska State Museum.

Throughout his career Duff maintained a close association with museums and galleries, helping to plan important exhibits and new buildings. He participated in the planning and design of the new British Columbia Provincial Museum, though he left that museum before the new building was completed. He also participated in the early planning of the new Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, which opened to the public slightly more than two months before his death. Since joining the faculty at the university, Wilson Duff participated in the design and execution of two major exhibits that have helped to change our interpretations of Northwest Coast art and culture.

Duff's concern with the native history and culture of British Columbia never wavered, but his interests did gradually change from empirically oriented ethnography and ethnohistory to a more subjectivist appreciation and analysis of artistic forms. His first major publication was a 1953 monograph on the Upper Stalo Indians, a meticulous piece of ethnographic reconstruction based on his Master's thesis. One of his final and most ambitious publications was the 1975 catalogue for his stunning exhibit of prehistoric British Columbia stone sculpture. He apparently experienced some difficulty reconciling this transition in his work. Duff's next major publication after *Upper Stalo Indians* was a 1956 monograph on prehistoric stone sculptures, a work that foreshadowed his 1975 exhibition and catalogue, *Images Stone B.C.* In 1960, he edited a modest volume entitled *History, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool*, a pioneering attempt to make anthropology more useful to the people who normally are its subject matter. The authors of this 45-page volume were the Kitwancool themselves, a Gitksan group. Duff co-ordinated the collection and publication of their traditions as one of the services the Kitwancool requested in return for allowing their old poles to be removed to the British Columbia Provincial Museum for preservation. Exact copies of the poles were returned to the Kitwancool for installation in their villages. Duff remained a respected friend of the Kitwancool for the rest of his life.

The first (and only) volume of his projected work on the Indian history of British Columbia was published in 1964. It is in continual use to this day as a standard text and reference work. That same year, Duff's tribute to and analysis of Marius Barbeau's contributions to West Coast ethnology appeared in *Anthropologica*. Duff had a number of personal reminiscences of Barbeau which, unfortunately, he never committed to writing. He also made handwritten abstracts of Barbeau's *Tsimshian Field Notes* and made these available to Dr. Marjorie Halpin for her doctoral thesis on Tsimshian crests (*The Tsimshian Crest System: a study based on Museum specimens and the Marius Barbeau and William Beynon Field Notes*, 1973, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia). His last major ethnographic works were his 1969 Alaska totem pole survey and his *BC Studies* paper on the Fort Victoria treaties. In the latter he characteristically attempted to "take a hard look," in the light of Indian history and culture, at the eleven Fort Victoria treaties of 1850 and 1852 by which James Douglas extinguished the Indian title to land surrounding Victoria, Vancouver Island.

Duff's developing interest in Northwest Coast art, both as "high art" and as a subject for deep analysis, was represented by his instrumental role in two major exhibitions in 1967 and 1975, by the publications that resulted from those shows, and by his university teaching and off-campus lecturing in recent years.

The 1967 *Arts of the Raven* show at the Vancouver Art Gallery, in which Wilson Duff collaborated with artist Bill Reid and artist-anthropologist Bill Holm, was seen by many, including Duff, as a turning point in the appreciation of Northwest Coast art as "high art." "The shift in focus from ethnology to art," Doris Shadbolt noted in her foreword to the exhibit catalogue (Duff, Holm, Reid, 1967), "has been slower of accomplishment in the sculpture, painting and related arts of the Indians of the Northwest Coast than in other primitive cultures." It was this exhibit, Wilson Duff wrote eight years later (1975:13), that was "the threshold over which Northwest Coast art has come into full recognition as 'fine art' as well as 'primitive art'." (One should also mention in this context the Audrey Hawthorn and J. A. Morris "People of the Potlatch" exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1956. Duff also assisted in that exhibit.) We can never see Northwest Coast art the same again because of those exhibits.

This process of "redefinition" or "discovery" of high civilization on the Northwest Coast, to which Duff contributed so much, reflected his deep respect for native peoples and cultures. It is "part of the long overdue granting of recognition," Duff observed in reference of the *Images* exhibition (1975:24-5), "to the full and complete humanity of the people who originally lived here. . . . With the 'Arts of the Raven' show, we granted their artists credence as producers of high art. Perhaps our eyes were not even then completely open." With the *Images* exhibition, he continued, "we come a step further, and begin to grant their artist-philosophers credence as people of intellect and mature wisdom. To the existing proof of the prior claim in Indian presence in Canada may be added, however poorly understood, the evidence of thirty centuries of hard thinking."

The *Images* exhibition, which travelled east after its showing in Victoria and Vancouver, was a tour de force. It was a retrospective show of "the best surviving work of the artists of the last thirty centuries" prior to the arrival of the white man in British Columbia. Just as *Arts of the Raven* documented the high artistic qualities of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Northwest Coast art, so this exhibit was to unequivocally demonstrate the same truth for Northwest Coast prehistoric stone sculpture. The exhibit was spectacular and Duff's analysis penetrating and audacious. It was a great success. There no longer could be any question about the "high art" and "hard thinking" qualities of Northwest Coast Indian culture during both prehistoric and post-contact phases.

"A study of the text which follows," said Richard Simmins, originator of the exhibition, in his foreword to the catalogue (Duff, 1975:8-9), "gives only a partial insight into the contributions of Wilson Duff . . . who was the professional consultant to the exhibition. It was only after seeing a few of the prehistoric stone sculptures of

British Columbia and studying his early researches (*Anthropology in British Columbia*, No. 5, 1956) that I knew the exhibition could be assembled. Duff has given it form and coherence, tempering my enthusiasm with scholarly caution. His understanding is based upon more than 25 years of exposure to the art and culture of the Pacific Northwest; mine upon excitement of the unknown art I discovered for myself."

Images Stone B.C. was Duff's last major publication. It reflected his growing interest in the deep analysis of the logic of Northwest Coast art, an approach that benefited from both the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and the psychosexual theories of psychoanalysis, and which he characterized, reflecting his own empiricist background, as "anthropology with a great deal of artistic licence" (1975:12). The task Duff set for himself was to break through the surface meaning of objects to their "deeper" or "inner" meanings. "What do the images mean?" To attempt an answer is a "hazardous enterprise for one who values a reputation for scholarly discipline." But it is an attempt one nevertheless must make "to burst the chains of long-felt frustration."

This stone art, he said, Northwest Coast art in general, and, indeed, all other primitive arts equally remote from our own experience, have "remained as closed books for all too long, resisting our efforts to find the deeper meanings which we feel intuitively to be there. The best that I can offer are my own audacious imaginings about the meanings of the images. Imagination creates images in the first place; perhaps imagination and hard thinking are the keys to what they mean."

Duff had been searching for some years for that "additional level of meaning" in Northwest Coast art which lay beyond the manifest one of crests and mythological heroes. Perhaps it is to be found, he said, in a "system of inner logic" residing in the style and in the internal structure of individual works of art. "It is as though each is an equation wrapped as a single bundle. It constructs its statements upon the interplay between its parts, and between the literal and metaphoric meanings of its images." It uses inherent structural and conceptual dualism in the artifacts and images, such as outside-inside, head-body, front-back, part-whole, male-female, penis-vulva, and life and death (1975:14).

If Lévi-Strauss is correct in saying that the "savage mind" is really a scientific mind that uses natural images to create a "science of concrete," then, Duff maintained, the sophisticated primitive "artist-thinkers of the Northwest Coast" have developed an "advanced mathematics" of the concrete. In addition to the well-recognized representative and decorative functions of Northwest Coast art, this art had come to be "an arena for abstract thinking, a half-secret dialogue, a self conscious system for diagramming logical paradoxes, and therefore a medium for exploring by analogy living paradoxes in myth and life" (*Ibid.*). Duff had come closer than most others to cracking the code of that inner logic.

Duff's recent work on stone sculptures was actually a brief interlude, though a brilliant one, from his more lengthy researches into the work of Charles Edenshaw and other great Haida artists. He reported to the university in 1973 that he had by then accumulated enough material "for several books and many articles" on Haida art. Duff was never to complete that work. He was at times as uncertain about the value of his recent interpretations as he was sometimes audacious in their statement. Though he had developed a deep knowledge of Northwest Coast cultural traditions, he was never at ease with the comparative and theoretical perspectives that would have enabled him to place this knowledge in a wider context of discourse.

Wilson Duff left his personal mark upon many people and a scholarly legacy for us all. He will be long remembered. Future generations of students will build upon the foundations he provided.

Publications of Wilson Duff

From 1950 to 1956 Wilson Duff was editor of *Anthropology in British Columbia*, a publication of the Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.

1950 Preface to *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 1, pp. 1-2.

"Provincial Museum of British Columbia report." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 1, p. 8.

"Bibliography, 1940-1950." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 1, pp. 33-45.

1951 Preface to *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 2, p. 1.

"Anthropological research and publications." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 2, pp. 2-13.

"Notes on Carrier Social Organization." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 2, pp. 28-34.

"Indian Natural History." In *Victoria Naturalist*, vols. 7 and 8. Victoria, B.C.

1952 *Thunderbird Park*. Victoria: B.C. Government Travel Bureau.

Review of *Petroglyphs of Central Washington*, by H. T. Cain. In *B.C. Historical Quarterly*, July-October 1951.

Review of The Wolf Ritual of the Northwest Coast, by A. H. Ernst. In *American Anthropologist*, vol. 54, no. 4.

(With Viola E. Garfield) "Anthropological research and publications, 1952." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 3, pp. 5-9.

"Gitksan Totem Poles, 1952." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 3, pp. 21-30.

"The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, B.C." In *Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir*, no. 1, 136 pp.

1953 (With C. E. Borden) "A Scottsbluff-Eden Point from British Columbia." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 4, pp. 33-36.

1954 "Anthropological research and publications, 1953-54." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 4, pp. 5-9.

"A Heritage in Decay: the Totem Art of the Haidas." In *Canadian Art* 11(2).

1956 (With H. C. Taylor) "A Post-Contact Southward Movement of the Kwakiutl." In *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, 24(1):56-66.

(With J. E. M. Kew) *Selected list of publications pertaining to the Indians of British Columbia*. Victoria: Provincial Museum.

Thunderbird Park (Revised Edition). Victoria: B.C. Government Travel Bureau.

Native Indians: distribution of ethnic groups 1850; Population and Economic Life 1835; Population trends 1835-1954. Maps 12, 13a, 13b, in *British Columbia Atlas of Resources*.

"An Unusual Burial at the Whalen Site." In *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, 24(1):67-72.

Report of the anthropologist. In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1955*, pp. 23-26. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

"Unique Stone Artifacts from the Gulf Islands." In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1955*. pp. 45-55. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

"Anthropological research and publications, 1955-56." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 5, pp. 7-14.

"Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser Valley and Gulf of Georgia." In *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 5, pp. 15-151.

1957 Report of the curator of anthropology. In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1956*, pp. 18-22. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

"Totem poles recall vanished seafarers." In *The Crowsnest* 9(3):22-23.

1958 Report of the curator of anthropology. In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1957*, pp. 18-24. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

(With J. E. M. Kew) "Anthony Island, A Home of the Haidas." In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, Report for the year 1957*, pp. 37-64. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

1959 "Mungo Martin, Carver of the Century." In *Museum News* 1(1):3-8. Vancouver.

"Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool." In *Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir* no. 4, 45 pages.

1960 "The mortuary poles of Ninstints." In *Victoria Naturalist* 16(7):65.

1961 *Preserving British Columbia's Prehistory*. Victoria: Archaeological Sites Advisory Board.

Report of the curator of anthropology. In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1960*, pp. 20-23. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

"The Killer Whale Copper." In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1960*, pp. 32-36. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

"Wanted: a word. The Clearing House." In *Western Museums Quarterly* 1(3):23.

1962 Review of *Men of Medeek*, by Will Robinson. In *The Beaver* 293, Winter, p. 56.

1963 "Planning for the Centennial." In *Museum Round-up*, no. 12, pp. 25-27.

"Stone Clubs from the Upper Skeena River." In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1962*, pp. 27-38. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

Thunderbird Park. Victoria: B.C. Government Travel Bureau.

1964 President's report. In *Museum Round-up*, no. 16, pp. 7-8.

"Contributions of Marius Barbeau to West Coast Ethnology." In *Anthropologica*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 63-96.

The Indian History of British Columbia: Vol. 1. The Impact of the White Man. Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir, no. 5, 117 pp.

1965 "Thoughts on the Nootka Canoe." In *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. Report for the year 1964*, pp. 24-31. Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Department of Education.

1966 Review of *Northwest Coast Indian Art*, by Bill Holm. In *American Antiquity*.

1967 *Arts of the Raven: Masterworks by the Northwest Coast Indians*. Text by Wilson Duff, with articles by Bill Reid and Bill Holm. Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver Art Gallery.

1969 (With W. Suttles and others) "Ethics in anthropological field work." In *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 3(2):171-190. (Session chaired by Wilson Duff.)

"The Northwest Coast (La Côte Nord-Ouest)." In *Masterpieces of Indian and Eskimo Art from Canada*. Paris: Musée de l'Homme.

"The Fort Victoria Treaties." In *BC Studies*, no. 3, pp. 3-57.

Totem Pole Survey of Southeastern Alaska. Juneau: Alaska State Museum. (Editor and senior author, with Jane Wallen and Joe Clark.)

1970 "On Wardwell's Partial Rediscovery of a Northwest Coast Monument." In *Curator*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 243-250.

1971 Foreword to *Indian Rock Carvings of the Pacific Northwest*, by Edward Meade. Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing Ltd.

1973 Foreword to *The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians*, by Kalervo Oberg. University of Washington Press.

Review of *The Economic Impact of the Public Sector on the Indians of British Columbia*, by D. B. Fields and W. T. Stanbury. In *BC Studies*, no. 19, pp. 122-29; no. 10, pp. 73-121.

(With Michael Kew) "A Select Bibliography of Anthropology of British Columbia." Revised by Frances Woodward and Laine Ruus. In *BC Studies*, no. 19, pp. 73-121.

"Tsetsaut." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, 5 pp. to be published by the Smithsonian Institution.

"The Story of Ninstints." In *Charlottes*, vol. 2, pp. 15-20.

1974 "Bill Reid: an act of vision and an act of intuition." In *Bill Reid: A Retrospective Exhibition*, 2 pp. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1974.

1975 *Images Stone B.C. Thirty centuries of Northwest Coast Indian sculpture*, 191 pp. Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House.

1976 "Mute relics of Haida tribe's ghost villages." In *Smithsonian* 7(6):84-91.

Wilson Duff was Curator of Anthropology at the British Columbia Provincial Museum from 1950 to 1965. For the last nine of those years he had the help of a single full-time Assistant Curator. Michael Kew held this position from 1956 to 1959; Diane MacEachern (now Barwick) in 1959-1960; and I was his last Assistant in the Museum from 1960 on.

Diane Barwick's article gives a good impression of the atmosphere of that time. The paper immediately following by Della and Michael Kew recalls Wilson's continuing close association with his Coast Salish neighbours throughout the period.

D.N.A.

"A Grand Old Man at 35": Wilson Duff as Curator

Diane MacEachern Barwick
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, R.S.S.S.

By 1959 Wilson Duff's career had reached an early peak. He had a substantial professional reputation after nine years of research and writing; he was widely admired and universally liked. Stimulated by a year's work with Marius Barbeau and other anthropologists at the National Museum of Canada, he had returned to the British Columbia Provincial Museum in July, full of ideas, enthusiasm and ambition.

His own accumulated data for a revised series of museum handbooks on British Columbia tribes had been richly supplemented by copies of the voluminous field notes of Barbeau and Beynon. His monograph series was already soundly established and a number of important manuscripts had been submitted for his editorial judgment. The Kitwancool salvage project would be completed by publication of the manuscript he had ready for the press and the return of the replica poles carved by Mungo Martin and Henry Hunt. His expert knowledge of Northwest Coast art styles had been strengthened by examining collections during a tour of other museums, and his competence as curator increased by attending conferences and a training course in display techniques. In Victoria there was new archaeological work by Mike Kew, Bob Kidd and John Sendey to interest him, and he had formulated plans to expand the museum's programme of research and public education.

But he returned to isolation and frustration. He was disappointed to find that his friend Mike Kew, Assistant Anthropologist for three years, wished to join a community development programme in Saskatchewan, and disconcerted to learn that financial stringency in the provincial public service not only threatened the continuation of the monograph series but might preclude Mike's replacement on the already inadequate museum staff. The able secretary, Margaret Crummy, had to cope with all the routine administration and deal with visitors and sales of publications, plus typing all manuscripts and correspondence. The Director, Clifford Carl, and zoologist Charlie Guiguet had no assistants for their extensive biological research. Adam Szczawinski and Sheila Newnham maintained the herbarium in addition to their own botanical research, publications and displays. Frank Beebe, the superb technician, was fully occupied preparing and installing biological dioramas and displays, while the artist, Betty Newton, drew illustrations for publications. The only other full-time employee was the elderly attendant, Claude G. Briggs.

I had been one of Audrey Hawthorn's student assistants at the University of British Columbia Anthropology Museum for several years, and after graduation Bill Reid had found me a job in a friend's craft shop while I debated whether to do a graduate degree or take a cadetship at an American museum. I had just accepted a post-graduate fellowship when I was unexpectedly transferred to the Victoria shop in mid-July. Of course I visited the museum, but I was too shy to intrude on the curator of anthropology, who was already regarded (by his teachers and mine) as one of the major figures in Northwest Coast studies. But Wayne Suttles, Bob Kidd, Bill Reid, Della Kew and her brother Andy Charles were all around Victoria that summer and one of them took me to meet Wilson at the Shoal Bay "dig" he and Mike were running as a public education project in August. By August 26 I was writing to Harry Hawthorn, Wayne Suttles and my parents for advice:

> I've been asked to take over Mike Kew's job as Research Assistant in Anthropology Grade 1, at an initial salary of $356 a month with increments up to $420. With the M.A. degree the salary goes up to $550, and you can take leave of absence after a year or two, even with half-pay for further academic work. The job involves typing manuscripts, cataloguing acquisitions, caring for collections, preparing displays and guiding school tours . . .
>
> Wilson and Mike want me to take the job, and they are rushing it through the civil service routine, not even advertising the position across the country. The government may decide not to replace Mike, in keeping with their professed policy of economy with efficiency, but if they do Wilson Duff will quit . . .

I was appointed by August 31 and replaced Mike Kew on October 1, after attending the British Columbia Museums Association seminar at Camp Chilliwack with Wilson and Bill Reid—who gave addresses that stimulated a new excitement in the study and display of the "arts of the raven." At this and subsequent seminars, Wilson's reports on innovations elsewhere had an impact, for the curators of the many local museums then springing up were not content to be amateurs. Wilson already had a wide acquaintance among them and considerable understanding of their problems, for his own budget was little greater than theirs!

Ultimately his arguments that the British Columbia Provincial Museum should serve as a resource centre, had considerable effect, but in 1959 his immediate plans were more or less thwarted. Although attendance figures were about 70,000 in 1959 and 100,000 in 1960, few bureaucrats had any interest in expanding the role of the Provincial Museum, which seemed merely an awkward appendage to the Education Department's otherwise normal structure. Wilson's reports on the expanding services of the museums he had visited were ignored by officialdom, who apparently measured the museum's success by the number of visitors, mostly tourists and captive school children. As a result Claude Briggs spent much of his time organizing the signing of the visitors' book. Long ago, funds had indeed depended upon the number of signatures: Wilson delightedly showed me the old registers, wherein "minors and Chinese" were instructed not to record their attendance, presumably because they were not tax-payers.

Wilson's other ambitions were likewise frustrated by public service policy and penury: as he said in his annual report in 1959, "other duties left little time for research." His desk at home was piled with orderly files, for he could write only after office hours. His days were continually interrupted by visitors, telephone inquiries and the demands of routine correspondence, little of which could be delegated to me. We set to work transcribing and editing William Beynon's notes, but the monograph on Tsimshian winter ceremonies we began with such enthusiasm was never completed.

The year in which I served as Wilson's assistant was full of fun; nobody ever had a pleasanter introduction to the adult world of the first job. He was extraordinarily perceptive in encouraging others' talents, and generous in sharing his own expertise at writing and research. His gaiety and good temper, his apt puns and "ept" verse, lightened the endless routine tasks. He and his wife, Marion, had a gift for hospitality, somehow making sure I was not lonely without ever intruding on my privacy. I joined the Duffs for pot-luck dinners, attended local auctions, spent afternoons collecting firewood on the beach, played with their children, Marnie and Tom, teased Wilson about his attempts to copy Haida carving and held the ladder while he fastened his largest mask to the chimney-top to hasten its weathering. Quips and zany humour enlivened everything we did. But Wilson was serious about his carving: already his admiration for this art was no passionless intellectualized interest but, as he said, a "gut feeling." He was trying to learn its elements with his fingertips, and he mourned his inability to capture its perfection of line and proportion. Yet his parting gift to me, a face copied from a Haida pole, has been praised by numerous experts on native art.

The appointment had made me feel like a Northwest Coast expert; such pretensions were somewhat deflated when Wilson admitted he had been able to hire me only because I could type, and preparation of his Kitwancool manuscript was my first task.

Most of my time was taken up with improving the storage and cataloguing systems and the installation of displays. Wilson and Mike had never had the time nor resources to redesign the storage areas (and anyhow there was no additional space) and, aside from some excellent table cases devoted to fishing and whaling technology, had made little attempt to modernize the displays. There were many treasures in the early collections, but for a long time funds for new acquisitions had been negligible. Already Northwest Coast art was avidly sought by collectors and even local dealers were prepared to pay $200 for one mask or rattle. That amount was, I think, the museum's total annual purchase budget. If memory serves, more than half the anthropological items acquired in 1958 and 1959 had been donated by Wilson and Mike.

I had grown used to the troglodyte conditions suffered by Audrey Hawthorn and her assistants in the warren of crowded basement rooms at the University of British Columbia, but even this had not prepared me for the inconceivable difficulties of caring for collections in the archaic and ill-designed wing of the Parliament Buildings in Victoria which the British Columbia Provincial Museum had occupied for half a century. Wilson and I had to share a second-floor office which opened on the galleries and inevitably received streams of inadvertant visitors. Any typing had to be done on the one machine in the secretary's overcrowded office, equally subject to interruption.

The anthropology displays filled the basement and there was no work space closed to the public. Textiles, baskets and small artefacts were jammed into cubbyholes in the attics, up three long flights of stairs, while larger wooden objects and archaeological specimens were dispersed in various vaults under adjacent buildings, reached by dusty tunnels. As there was no water except in the basement lavatories, every item which needed cleaning had to be carried through the public galleries down to the "ladies," where I knelt to scrub in a bucket borrowed from Claude Briggs, afterwards cleaning up the mess and carrying the artefact back up two flights to the security of our office to dry.

Wall cases with interior lighting, planned since 1956, were belatedly being built in two of the four basement rooms, so that we had to design and install sixteen major displays in that year. And in those days the curator and his assistant literally installed the displays: we took the petty cash; hunted the shops for paint, burlap and fittings; cleaned artefacts and mounted them; did the research for labels; and finally wrote them with a special stylus and template. Wilson did explain, as I scrubbed Misty Green and Spanish Gold paint from my hair, and rented a sewing machine to make the drapery screen needed for his mask display (loudly lamenting that I might as well have stayed in Home Economics if this was Anthropology), that our exertions were a necessary economy; *we* were paid less than the public service painters and carpenters. Indeed, as the *Colonist* editorial, "Why Study Anthropology," pointed out when the post was advertised on my departure, assistant anthropologists were paid less per hour than grave-diggers.

We were smugly proud of our display innovations: spotlights, screens, peekholes, invisible mounts, textured surfaces and lots of primary colours. Visitors were more accustomed to the "visible storage" cases used since the 1890s and seemed to assume that dust and illegible labels guaranteed authenticity. Standing in front of a completed display, after days spent tenderly cleaning grime accumulated during a half-century's improper storage from a dozen painted hide bags, I once overheard a visitor comment: "there's nothing that looks old here—it can't be a very good museum."

Wilson was on cordial terms with all of the museum staff, but none really shared his interests. In fact he led a rather solitary life, only occasionally lunching with one or two friends from other departments of the public service. They rather struck me as "young Turks"; like him veterans and postwar graduates, now in their mid-thirties and in mid-career, growing increasingly impatient with the bureaucratic and financial restrictions of public service life and the isolation of Victoria. They talked of other options in other cities, but felt constrained by their families and their mortgages.

Their superiors were more effectively acculturated, less ready to challenge public service customs and codes. The museum director, like others of his rank and generation, accepted the restrictions of the system and was content to wangle what he could by skilled negotiation. Although he understood the urgency of Wilson's salvage work, Clifford Carl was somewhat appalled at the cost of anthropological fieldwork and acquisitions as compared to the biological research which had long been the museum's main role, and Wilson had to do some fairly skilful politicking to gain support for his plans.

Certainly they had considerable difficulty in opposing pressures for retrenchment that year, and in negotiating a special grant for the purchase of the Mungo and David Martin Collection of heirloom ceremonial items which Mungo was determined the museum should acquire after his only son was tragically drowned in September 1959.

The formal presentation ceremony, held in Mungo's house in Thunderbird Park, in December 1959, was one of the few occasions on which Wilson failed his own exacting standards as historian and ethnographer. He told me not to bother arranging for a recording and was chagrined when Mungo's magnificent oratory, ably translated by Helen Hunt, transformed the gathering into a kind of Kwakiutl potlatch, the last display by Naka'penkum of his privileges and wealth. Wilson ruefully admitted that he had expected a perfunctory handing-over to the Minister: "but I ought to have known that Mungo would make it real, would make it history."

I saw Wilson angry only three times in that year. Because the incidents so exemplify his integrity and his meticulous scholarship they are worth reporting. Although he passionately admired Northwest Coast art he would not acquire any pieces himself, lest there be any conflict with his duty as curator. When I bought a Salish copper rattle from a local dealer as a Christmas gift for another anthropologist I was firmly rebuked—first for encouraging the trade in artefacts and then for refusing to donate it to fill a gap in the collections. I had a second rebuke when he found I had completed a display on mat-making without searching the ethnographies to verify my use of a curved rather than a straight mat-needle for

Interior Salish groups. His most emphatic display of righteous anger was directed at a local handcraft dealer who had purchased a large collection of stone points for re-sale at preposterous prices—after he had wasted a whole afternoon explaining that such dealings would encourage vandalism at archaeological sites and, in view of the proposed antiquities legislation he was helping to draft, would probably be illegal.

Wilson did not despise collectors, nor deplore the purchase of ethnographic materials, so long as Indian interests were protected. Indeed, when he took me along to see the famous private ethnographic collections in and near Victoria it was clear that he was on the best of terms with the owners and his delight in handling their treasures was *almost* disinterested—although he admitted hoping that his friendly interest might someday prevent dispersal to dealers south of the border. He did disapprove of the looting of archaeological material, and spent much time writing and lecturing on the protection of sites and instructing interested amateurs in scientific techniques of excavation and recording. He had arranged that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police should notify him whenever midden burials were disturbed, and we spent many afternoons respectfully but hastily salvaging remains under the bemused gaze of bulldozer operators.

Wilson cared most deeply that traditional Indian cultures should be preserved and correctly interpreted to outsiders. Few busy curators would have bothered, as he regularly did, to talk to visiting school groups. He most enjoyed the sessions with Indian children from the residential schools, and when he brought out the best specimens for them to handle and wear he constantly reminded them that, back home, "Mrs.—" or "Mr.—" still had valuable skills and knowledge that they should respect and attempt to acquire. He believed that Indian artefacts which still had meaning and were used in ceremonies should stay in Indian hands—although I remember he once had trouble restraining his acquisitive urge when he saw a goat-wool blanket, a gift at a winter dance display, being singed when carelessly thrown too near the central fire.

Wilson's comprehensive knowledge of Northwest Coast ethnography was probably already unequalled, although he was diffident in claiming expertise and deferred to those who by extended fieldwork commanded intimate knowledge of particular tribal cultures. He had neither funds nor time for lengthy field trips, but constantly sought opportunities for tuition, visiting and being visited by his Salish friends Andrew and Sophie Misheal, seeking out Indians visiting Victoria, sitting in the carving shed learning from Mungo and Abaya Martin and the Hunt family. And of course Bill Reid's visits gave him an opportunity for exuberant discussions of the wonders of Haida art—leaving him "high on thinking" for days afterward. The only other friend who visited regularly was Wayne Suttles, who shared his interest in the Salish winter dances. Wilson attended all of the dances within a feasible distance, taking me and sometimes his little daughter along and carefully instructing us in the proper way to behave.

Although Wilson corresponded with many Northwest Coast specialists he had no local peer-group and after the year in Ottawa he missed the stimulation of colleagues always available to gossip and talk shop, to encourage and challenge his ideas. His friend Willard Ireland, the Provincial Archivist of British Columbia, shared many of his interests but the nearest professional anthropologist was Sally Robinson, then working with the people about Nanaimo. After Mike and Della Kew's departure he became more and more aware of his isolation from the "mainstream" of anthropology in the universities. I was too inexperienced to fill Mike's colleague role, although I was presumptuous enough and Wilson generous enough for a genuine camaraderie to develop.

Realization of his isolation increased Wilson's insecurity about his status in the anthropological profession. When he talked of his work he alternated between diffidence and arrogance, masking his unsureness with wry wit. His delight was expressed in a characteristically offhand way when, just before my departure, an important invitation brought the recognition he craved: "Hey, Diane, I've made it—I'm a grand old man at thirty-five."

I left the museum in 1960 with considerable regret. Brief visits during the 1960s, the publications we exchanged and a sporadic correspondence kept me up to date on Wilson's interests, which seemed not changed but expanded by his move to the University of British Columbia and the stimulus of teaching. My own work with Aborigines owed much to his writing on Indian history, and the information he generously provided when I sought his help for an Aboriginal land claims case in 1969 had considerable impact in Australia. Occasional letters gave me news of friends, discussed the various conferences and new writing which excited him, reported his involvement in planning new museums and his concern with political developments in Indian affairs, mentioned his enjoyment of teaching and his pride in Marnie and Tom. The letters recorded the small triumphs of a successful life, but also revealed something of the old insecurity: he joked about his "constipublication," detailing the numerous commitments that would preclude intensive writing for yet another year, but by 1968 was ruefully admitting that "a lot of new claimants" were contesting his "ownership" of British Columbia ethnography. Like most of his academic generation he seemed stunned by the rapid expansion of the anthropological profession; while delighting in this new interest, he felt that the youngsters, who now easily obtained support for full-time research, were quickly exceeding his own expertise. He joked about this challenge, reporting that the new departments were "sending lots of people into the field without first getting my permission," but his old diffidence increased, and his decision to hand over his notes to younger scholars was in a sense an abdication.

He wrote that a bid to return to museum administration had failed but seemed reconciled: "I have tenure and a disgustingly high salary in the teaching world and that is where I'll grow old now." In 1971 and 1972 his letters rather incoherently discussed his increasing immersion in the symbolism of Haida art, wryly noting that various friends "are concerned about my sanity and reputation." When I came home, for the perfect summer of 1972, I witnessed his delight in his grand-daughter Raven, was taken to see the new British Columbia Provincial Museum, was told about innumerable exciting developments in his various projects. But when I asked about the unfinished tribal histories and ethnographies he talked instead of Edenshaw and panel pipes. When he came to say good-bye in June 1973, his last words were of regret for the writing still unfinished.

"People Need Friends, It Makes Their Minds Strong": A Coast Salish Curing Rite

Michael Kew
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Della Kew

For many years, while he was with the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria, Wilson Duff observed and participated in initiations and inter-village spirit dances with his friends among the Songish, Saanich and Cowichan bands on Vancouver Island. At Esquimalt, he was given an Indian name with which he was called to stand as a witness during ceremonial gift exchanges and displays of hereditary privileges which are features of the "potlatch" events of modern Salish winter dances. When we moved to Victoria in 1956, one of us to work with Wilson in the museum and the other to work mainly with a home and young family, Wilson helped us enter the routine of attending spirit dances. It became part of the job. Friends of Wilson's would phone the museum with news of impending initiations, or with invitations to large dances, and one or more of us would be off to the weekend gatherings.

For Della, this was a continuation of her earlier experiences growing up as a member of a Coast Salish community, and it led to a deepening and renewing of attachments to kinfolk in every one of the Indian communities of southern Vancouver Island; for Michael, it introduced an ever-widening circle of welcoming in-laws.

There was little *research* in what we did, but much learning. We suspect this was true for Wilson, too. Sometimes he talked about spirit dancing, more than once just to express a personal envy of the satisfaction he perceived to be a central part of a dancer's vision and trance experiences. And he shared with others a large fund of knowledge, especially about variations in initiation rituals. But he wrote almost nothing on the subject. In this field his contributions to scholarly work were made indirectly through the work of colleagues and students with whom he shared ideas and memories. He helped us to understand—to know the virtue of extended study—to learn that ethnographic research is to know as others know.

Since those early days the continuity and revitalization of traditional Salish ritual, especially spirit dancing, has been well documented. Salish shamanic rites have been described too, notably those for assisting and contacting the dead, for these are often minor events at winter spirit dances. Of course, at its core, spirit dancing itself is a shamanic act as are many of the rites and procedures of the Shaker Church. However, shamanic curing rites outside of the Shaker Church and spirit dance settings, have not been well documented in their modern form. This is understandable, for they are held on short notice and are small in scale, being contained within the restricted social setting of the family and the private dwelling. Moreover they are directed to the goal of individual health, not to the display of prerogatives of class and personal privilege to which the wider public is invited. They have been infrequently witnessed by anthropologists.

We present here a description of such a curing ceremony. It fills a gap in the ethnographic literature and offers another glimpse of a cultural system which, with Wilson Duff, we have admired for the depth of social support it extends to the individual.

Use of cameras and tape recorders is not allowed during spirit dances or most other sacred rituals of the Salish. A paramount reason for this is the potential offence which such records may have for guardian spirit powers, and hence the inherent danger recordings pose for individual dancers. Accordingly it is out of the question for researchers to use such equipment. At the time of this observation we were keeping a journal of ceremonial gatherings of all kinds—time, place, participants, and so on, but we were not using notebooks during proceedings. This occasion so impressed us both, perhaps because of our active participation and the patently apparent therapy, that we systematically recorded from memory, during the two days following the rite, a full description of events. What follows is the text of those notes, with only minor editing. It is a collation of the observations of both of us, being as faithful to the reality of our similar, but not identical, points of view as we could make it.

When we made these observations we were known to be doing research on ceremonies, but it was not explicitly s observers that we participated in this rite. The exact locations of events are immaterial and we have used pseudonyms in order to preserve for others the option of privacy.

The Actors and The Setting

Participants in this rite do not comprise a cross section of the community to which they belong but are people whose lives are closely tied to the rich fund of traditional Indian belief and ritual activity which is open to Halkomelem and Straits language groups of southern British Columbia and northwest Washington. All the males, except one of the authors, are sċəlɛxʷəm or "old dancers" and, in fact, men with much experience in spirit dance activities. The rest are active singers and regular participants in these winter ceremonies. All participants, again excepting the authors, are, or have at some time been, active members of the Shaker Church.

Peter, the shaman, or "Indian doctor" in English, and ṡxʷnɛ m in Halkomelem, is from Washington state and has skʷənilɛč as his spirit power. This is a power which enables him to own and supervise the use of a pair of implements which may embody his power, divine sickness or harmful materials, and remove them from people or places. Peter uses these often during winter dances, sometimes at the request of persons who thank him with gifts of money, but at other times, such as this, he does not use the implements. They require the services of two or more sturdy young men who hold them during the performance.

The patient, Mary, is a woman of 54, who was born and raised a member of an interior Salish band but has lived among Halkomelem speakers for many years, since her marriage to David. They have raised two foster daughters, aged 17 and 13.

Both Mary and David were, in their own words, "drunks" for many years following their marriage. But, in 1955, they joined the Shaker Church, becoming active and devoted members—David served for several years as an elder and minister. They have been teetotalers and non-smokers since joining the church. But neither has enjoyed full health. He suffers from heart trouble and a severe arthritis in hands and arms. She has no obvious physical ailments and often says that the White doctors she goes to find nothing wrong with her. She appears to suffer from an acute nervous condition, bordering on hysteria, if she attempts to travel any distance from home. She may ride in an automobile for a few hundred yards around the village, or to a nearby shopping centre, but for many years she has been no further than that from home. This has a severely restricting effect on her life for she cannot attend most of the spirit dances, meetings of the Shaker Church, or sport gatherings which her family and neighbours attend. Both the patient and her husband have been "worked on" on previous occasions, that is they have had curing rites performed for them by Shakers and Indian doctors.

We were first told of the impending rite at 10:30 a.m. of the day on which it took place, when Mary phoned to tell her troubles to Della (they are classificatory sisters-in-law—ṡxʷʔɛləx). In a weary voice, Mary explained that she had been sick for the last three days and had received no help from her family. David and her eldest daughter had gone to a spirit dance three days earlier on Vancouver Island, and had not returned until late the following day. Mary had been unable to have any shopping done.

"And when I woke them up and told them to go shopping so I could cook, they just sat around and ate up the food they brought home from that dance," was her complaint.

She went on to say that Peter, the Indian doctor, had got to her place yesterday, and that as soon as he had come inside he knew there was something wrong.

"When his daughter came in my bedroom she said right away, 'here's the one that's in trouble'. And nobody told him about me, he just knew."

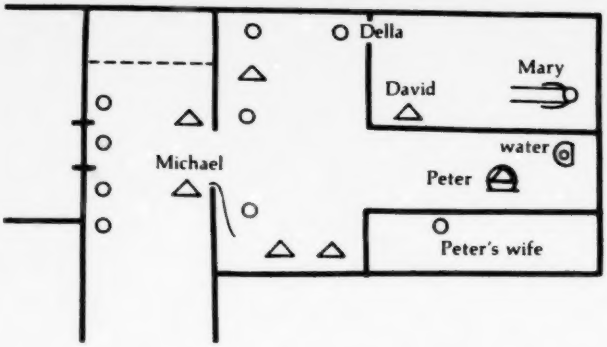
Peter had agreed to return to try and help Mary in her troubles, and it was in expectation of this visit that Mary asked us to come and help her, especially by listening to what Peter had to say when he worked on her, and then to explain what he said. Mary's command of English is limited and Peter often speaks in that language, using an extensive vocabulary which is well beyond Mary's control. We agree and leave for Mary and David's when she phones upon Peter's arrival at 1:00 p.m.

When we arrive we shake hands with Peter and his wife, and greet David and Mary, who is lying down in their bedroom. In addition to David, Mary, and their daughters, there are others present: Mary's sister, and a man and wife from across the street; the last having been asked by Mary to cook a meal for the guests, is already preparing vegetables and meat for soup. Soon afterwards two brothers and one of their wives arrive. They have been summoned by David to assist, and one of them carries a deer-skin drum.

Soon the youngest daughter of the household is sent by her father to call Peter's children who are visiting another family nearby. They return quickly; a young man, about 25 years, a sister, a few years younger, and another younger still. There are 17 persons present in the house when the curing rite begins.

Preparing to Work

The "work" is to take place in the bedroom, where Mary lies clothed, on her white covered bed under a white wool blanket. A single bed stands against the opposite wall and there are two small tables, plus a television set on a portable stand, making the small room crowded. David asks for help and we move the small furnishings across the hall and bring in five wooden chairs from the kitchen. One of these is set near the head of Mary's bed and David places upon it a deep plastic mixing bowl three quarters full of cold water. Another chair is placed close for Peter to sit upon and, with these preparations complete, David asks people to come to the bedroom. At the start of the session, furnishings and people are arranged as indicated in this diagram.



About 1:45 p.m., when Peter has seated himself beside Mary and others are gathered around, he speaks briefly explaining his background as a curer and what he intends to do for Mary. We recall three main points about his life and work: first, the inclination and ability to cure people came to him early in life and unbidden.

"All my life, since I was a small boy, I've had pity for sick people. It seems I must do what little I can to help them."

Second, the ability to help people is not in himself, it resides in his spirit power.

"It's not *me* that does this, it's this thing that's given to me."

Thirdly, the ability to help, stems from a source that is external to and separate from himself; it is independent, expendable and liable to be withdrawn.

"You know I'm not one to use this all the time. I don't go around looking for things to do. If I use it too much or use it carelessly, it'll leave me."

With this introduction, Peter then explains how he has been led to come to Mary's assistance.

"You know, I'm a man that gets up every day at a certain time. No matter what I've been doing or how late I've been up. Yesterday I woke very early, about 3:30, just coming daylight. And I had to sing. I saw something then. There was this person—so troubled, so restless; but I didn't know who it was. And it stayed with me all day. It bothered me and I couldn't forget it. Somehow I just had to travel. So we got in the car and we came up here, and as we were coming I was thinking about our brother David—maybe I should go and see him."

"Well I didn't know where he lived, though I been by here many times, but the daughter had kind of an idea, and we stopped and she went in. Then we followed and found her (indicating Mary). and then it came to me. Then I knew. *She* was the one that was in my vision.

"Well it was too late to do anything then. There were no people ready to help, so that's why I've returned today."

With this, Peter proceeded with his preparations.

"Now I'll have to ask you people to bear with me. (He gestures in the manner which is called sċəhayəɬ, and is made with one or both hands, raised to eye level or higher, palm inward, and waved gently up and down. It is a gesture of either supplication or gratitude.) I'm going to see if I can find out what the trouble is. (He dips the fingers of his right hand into the water, then washes his hands very lightly, then his face, and finally back over his hair.)

"My face is chilled. It's numb. (His voice has tensed and his facial muscles too, and now he makes the involuntary cries of the spirit dancer, the sounds which are called xyəqɬɛləm —a quavering, gasping sound made deep in the throat.)

"I'm not going to touch her yet. I'm just going to see first if I can find out what it is. After, then I might touch her. Then we'll need help because she might get up. That's why I asked David to call you boys. So just bear with me for awhile folks."

Finding The Trouble: A Diagnosis

Sitting on his chair and facing the patient, Peter begins one of his songs, which is immediately picked up by his younger daughter who sings in a strong, clear voice. She accompanies with a skin drum. Others who know the song join in and the small room reverberates with quick steady drum beats. The most vocal accompanists are

Peter's family and the two brothers, all of whom know the song well.

The song which Peter sings is of a style which has intermittent pauses, when singing stops and the drum beat terminates with a rapid roll. Then after a pause, the song is resumed as Peter himself determines. He sings one phrase solo, and it is then picked up by the others.

After several of these verses of singing, during which Peter sits with eyes closed, body and face tense and trembling slightly, tears on his cheeks, there is a pause and Peter speaks.

"I'm beginning to see something. But it's dim. It happened a long time ago, way over there. (He gestures to the north.) There's something there. I'm beginning to see. Just bear with me. Oh, my dear ones, it's like there is a little gap. (He indicates a small separation with his hands.) Just a little distance between her and something else."

The song resumes, another verse is completed, and Peter speaks again, his voice tense with emotion.

"It's coming clearer. This poor unfortunate one (indicating Mary) is laying there, she's been there a long time—oh such a long time! It's like she's on a beach and the long swells (motioning with his hands the slow sweep of ocean waves) are coming in. They almost reach her but not quite. There's a small gap left."

At this point David interjects with an interpretation of Peter's vision. This seems to startle Peter who opens his eyes and looks at David, who says:

"I know when that happened what you are talking about. It was at Cape Mudge a long time ago, when I was trollin', maybe twenty years ago. An' she (Mary) dropped her wedding ring overboard and tipped over the canoe when she went to get it. An' she pretty near drowned that time. That's it, that's where you were pointing."

Peter merely nods in ackowledgement of David's explanation. He expresses neither agreement nor disagreement, and does not follow up the connection so obviously proposed between his vision and the remembrances of David.

During this preliminary part of the ritual, Mary has remained lying on her back, but her legs have moved restlessly, her head rolling frequently from side to side. She also exhibits a curious chewing motion in which her tongue has rolled conspicuously over her lips and inside her cheeks.

Peter sings again, and then announces that he will try to reach "that person" (this we agree afterwards, means his vision of Mary). He washes his hands and face again with cold water, and then kneeling on the floor facing the door of the room, begins his song again. As he sings he passes his hands over the floor as if he were trying to collect something. After a few phrases of the song, he stops and announces:

"It's no good. I can't seem to find it this way. Maybe if I had someone helping me on the other side we could do it. I guess I'll have to try it another way. (The reference here is apparently to a technique used by Shakers, in which two persons work in company to surround and sweep or gather together a lost soul, a sickness, or some evil. What we understand Peter to mean is that if there was another Shaman or curer present, they could combine their efforts.)

Peter resumes his seat and sings again. Then he calls for "a clean, wet cloth." There are half-whispered repetitions of the request and one of the patient's daughters produces a clean, pressed, man's handkerchief, hastily dampened in the bathroom sink. Peter takes it and lays it out flat on the small bed across from the patient. His wife moves closer to the head of the bed in order to make room for the handkerchief.

Once again Peter starts his song and makes the sweeping or collecting gestures over the handkerchief. This time he is successful in enclosing something in his cupped hands and he carefully places this something, as one would a small animate thing, upon the handkerchief. Then he launches into an explanation of what he has found and what he proposes to do.

"There is something here that has been lost for a long time. That's why she is so restless—see how she moves (indicating Mary with his hand). It's the same with that (pointing to whatever is on the handkerchief). It's so tired and restless. It's going to go one way or the other. There is also someone else there with her, I don't know who it is, maybe one of her ancestors. They're calling her. They want to take her.[1] And that's going to go. It's so tired it's going to go—one way or the other. Now we want to try and help. We hope it will come *this* way.

"If she (Mary) would sing that song that was trying to come last night, that would release her and bring her back. You wouldn't have to dress her or anything—just paint her face and if she sang that once, that's all she'd need.[2] But what I'm going to do, I'm going to try and put that (gesturing to the handkerchief) back on her—back where it belongs. But first of all I've got to remove some other things which are on her—some bad things.

---

[1] When a person is ill and near death, he often hears his close, deceased kinfolk talking. They may be under the bed or in a corner of the room, and often call him to come to them. Persons who have been gravely ill often recall hearing these voices. These are who Peter means when he says "they want to take her."

[2] This is an unusual and revealing reference to *syəwən*, the song which a guardian spirit may give to a person. It is implied by Peter that something (some supernatural) has asked Mary to sing a song, or is trying to give her a song and that it will be directly beneficial to her. It would perhaps, release this lost part of her and make her whole or well again, if she would sing that song. She would not have to be initiated as a dancer. For her immediate needs and possibly for a permanent release from the troubles besetting her, she need sing only once.

"You know, when something has lain outside for a long time (he points out into the dusty backyard) it gathers all sorts of things. They fall and settle on it. So its the same with this poor one here. She's lain so long like this that she has all sorts of things that aren't good on her. They have to be removed. She has to be cleaned. That's what I'm going to try and do first. When I touch her she might cry out and try to move, so we may need help here."

The Curing

At this juncture Peter beings his song again and applies more water to his hands and face. Della moves onto the foot of Mary's bed and prepares to hold her legs while one of the two brothers motions to Michael to enter the room and hold Mary's upper body. Peter moves closer, still seated, and prepares to put his hands on Mary. Della leans on her legs, while Michael places one hand on each of her shoulders and pushes gently down. Still singing, and half rising from his chair, Peter places both of his hands upon Mary's hips and slowly pushes upwards along her sides, over her chest—exerting considerable force, but moving slowly. As his hands reach her neck they spread to bear on each side of her chin and his movement changes to a pulling rather than pushing movement as he slowly draws both hands upwards. At the last moment his patient's mouth and nose are exposed, distorted between his hands, and he suddenly wrenches them free as if he has at last succeeded in overcoming some resistance—plucked something free from the patient. Peter's entire motion is a continuous pushing or wiping, as if he were wiping her body free of some material, clinging substance.

Two or three of these wiping sequences are repeated one after another, following approximately the same paths. While these are being carried out the patient's body shudders and writhes, reaching a climax of struggle just before the curer's hands are wrenched away, then building to another climax slowly, as the curer's hands proceed with their wiping motions.

Peter pauses in his exertions to say that this position is no good, and that we will have to sit the patient up. We do this by swinging her legs over the side of the bed and lifting her under the shoulders. Della sits on Mary's right, towards the foot of the bed, Michael on the other side and we each hold an arm and shoulder of Mary as Peter makes another wiping motion, essentially the same as the previous ones, but this time remaining seated on his chair, facing the patient. This still is not entirely satisfactory because Peter now motions one of the brothers to hold Mary from behind, and passing his drum to his brother, he steps onto the bed to kneel at Mary's back and hold her head steady.

Now the wiping motions are repeated several times, following at first the path described above—upward sweeps culminating in a sudden pull from the region of the mouth and nose of the patient. These are followed by wiping from the top of her head down to her neck, then forward to the mouth and free. Other movements are from each shoulder to the hands and ending with a pull from the finger tips. Singing and drumming continues throughout.

Completion of this cleansing part of the ritual is signified by cessation of the song. Peter then sits back in his chair, nods to the brother on the bed who then resumes his former place, and then Peter asks for a clean bowl of water. The first is now discoloured and the floor quite damp at Peter's feet. While the water is being changed, Peter speaks briefly of its virtues:

"You know I have great faith in this water. It can do a lot. It can work miracles. You know, everything needs water—the plants, and all living things, they all need it. I always use it when I'm doing this kind of work. It's cooling and I know what it can do."

When the bowl of fresh water is placed on the chair at the head of the bed, Peter again washes his hands and leans over and makes a slow and deliberate gesture, picking something up in his cupped hands from the handkerchief. (We understand this to be a soul or shadow of Mary.) He carefully turns to face the patient who remains seated on the bed, supported on both sides. Facing her, Peter raises his cupped hands and releases them with a spreading motion before her face. Then he turns to the bowl of water, immerses both hands briefly then holds them over the bowl as if he were grasping water in his clenched hands. Placing them one over the other as if they were both grasping a straight rod or meant to form a continuous tube, be bends forward and blows four times in succession through his clenched hands into the bowl. Then he turns towards Mary again and makes a throwing motion, opening his clenched hands as he does, and sprinkling her with water. This is a motion which returns the shadow or part of Mary previously placed before her, into her actual body.

A similar sequence of these restoring motions is repeated over the handkerchief, and we understand these to be directed to the ancestor of Mary who remained there.

During this process of replacing these lost or missing elements, there is no singing or drumming. Peter is relaxed, although concentrating and proceeding deliberately with his tasks. Mary is calm, moving less frequently with little need of restraint. She lies back again on the bed at the end of the ritual.

The bowl of water is removed by Peter's daughter at his request, and the girl is directed by her mother to throw the water outside on the ground, not down the bathroom sink. (This is consistent with a recurring injunction observed by spirit dance initiates, to dispose of body wastes, food scraps and items of costume, in places apart from ordinary human activities.)

This concluded the ritual which lasted approximately one hour and forty-five minutes.

The Aftermath

Mary, David, Della and Peter and his wife stay in the bedroom while the rest of us move into the living room, which is a relief for the bedroom has been warm and stuffy. We relax and talk of other things for a while. But one of the brothers volunteers this account of Mary's troubles:

"She's been like that for a long time—that trouble has been with her practically all the time I've known them. They say it's an Indian doctor from up her way (that is, the interior Salish region) did it. She was living with this young fellow from up there, that was before she got married to David. I think she even had a child there too. But then she met David and they got married. That made the young fellow mad you see, and someone, maybe his father, but an Indian doctor anyway, did this to her."

At the same time, still in the bedroom, Mary is talking to David and the others. Her discourse is lengthy and rather disconnected, but Della recalls the following:

"I don't know why that person won't let me go. He's dead long ago. He's mean. I don't know what I can give him to make him let me go.

"At Cape Mudge I dropped my money in the water and I reached to get it and lost my wedding ring. Then I jumped in to try and get them back and got squashed between the canoe and the float. I don't remember anything, only somebody grab my hair, and they took me to the hospital. The whiteman wanted to operate but I wouldn't let him.

"Still, now, that bothers me, that place where I got squashed. It gets blue there and the doctor doesn't know what it is.

"I can't travel about any more. I used to go with David all the time before we were Shakers. We go up to town and I get the bottle—I'd hold it and away we'd go. Travel all over. Now we don't drink and I don't travel, 'cause I'm scared if I travel maybe I'll start to drink again."

The table in the kitchen is now set and David seats his guests to a meal of thick beef soup, bread, butter, tea, and tinned fruit.

At the table Peter does most of the talking, in a relaxed manner, and, as usual among guests at a meal among the Salish, there is good natured joking. But a good deal of Peter's conversation is serious commentary and explanation about his curing.

"I've travelled a lot and have fortunately been able to help people all over the place. I don't do it for what I get. It's what's in me that has to come out. I feel so sad to see people sick.

"I've been all over, even as far as Pendleton, Oregon; but I drew the line there. 'That's enough', I said. Because if you go too far away from your people it's no good—something or someone might hurt you.

"There's one thing I won't do: I won't help anyone that's using liquor. They've got to be in their right mind. I tell them, 'Go home and come back sober—when you're yourself.' And it's the same for me. Once in a while I take liquor too. But when I'm drinking and someone asks me for help, I tell them: 'I'm sorry, you'll have to wait'. I respect that power in me. It's a precious gift and I can't treat it wrong. It might spoil it.

"You know, people need help like that you folks gave this poor lady here today. People need friends, it makes their minds strong. Because, you know, the mind can weaken the body. The body can be strong all right, but something can hit that strong person's mind and his body will fail. Just like my old mother who's long gone now. She used to be so weak and frail in her body. I often think of it. But something, some small thing even, could lift her mind and she would be so strong. It's good to have friends like this, we all need them."

As the meal draws to an end, David and Mary come into the kitchen, she sits on a chair near the entrance to the living room and he stands beside her. David addresses those at the dinner table, using the formal style of Halkomelem speech-making. He calls the two brothers in turn by their Indian names, asking them to listen to what he is going to say. He gives 50¢ to his young daughter as he names each of these "witnesses," and she in turn gives the 50¢ to the man named. Then David announces that he is going to give $10.00 to Peter to thank him for what he has done. David then gives the money which he has been holding up to the view of those present, to his youngest daughter and she takes it to Peter. Della, as befits a relative who wishes to thank someone for helping kinfolk, also gives Peter a small gift of money.

David announces in turn, gifts of one dollar each to

Peter's wife and family for their help as singers, and these are again given out by David and Mary's daughter. Della again follows with a gift to each visitor.

When these gifts have been made, one of the brothers speaks formally in Halkomelem, thanking Peter for his work, thanking David for treating his visitors properly, and thanking us for supporting David and Mary. David and Della reciprocate by stepping forward to place 50¢ in coin in the "witnesses" hand.

Peter then speaks very briefly to thank everyone and to affirm again that the friendship and support shown here today for others, is a great and valuable thing.

Conclusions

We do not have sufficient data, nor is this the place to attempt generalizations about Salish curing rites. This description must stand mainly as an illustration. We offer only one observation, that this is pre-eminently a social rather than a private ritual, despite the ract that the supernatural powers involved are private and personal. What we have described is a total social sequence of events which surround the core ritual in which patient, shaman, and shaman's supernatural helpers, are the focal actors. It is far from being a private therapy session behind closed doors.

The curing process begins the day before the assembly, when the shaman makes his unplanned visit and the guiding influence of his vision is discovered. His temporary departure allows essential preparations to be made and the necessary congregation of helpers to materialize. The cure concludes after the meal the next day, when gifts are given and gratitude expressed to departing visitors.

In the course of his visit the shaman defines his role explicitly for the group. He teaches them by reminiscence, explanation and metaphor. With his supernatural power he discerns a source of the patient's trouble, makes this known, and manages the participation of others in curative acts. We who are the "bit-players" come away feeling supportive and supported. And it is the shaman's explicit analysis which ensures this. He teaches about the importance of the context of friends and kinfolk in which all of us live. The patient as an individual is cleansed and made whole, and she and her family are brought into harmony. The day before the gathering she is disturbed and alienated, when we arrive she is ill in bed, and before we depart she is seated in her kitchen, restored and surrounded by her family.

As an ethnographer, Wilson Duff was strongly conscious of the partnership that exists between informants and the anthropologist who records and interprets their culture. The Indian people with whom he worked were not only his teachers, they were frequently also his good friends. Invariably, Wilson's relationship with the Indian informants, artists, and leaders with whom he dealt became one of mutual respect and responsibility, often of real affection as well.

Both ethically and emotionally Wilson felt strong debts to the people who created the remarkable cultural achievements of the Northwest Coast and Plateau then shared these accomplishments through himself and others with the rest of humanity. Whenever he could he tried to repay his debts in small ways and large. Wilson's expert testimony in the Lands Claims cases discussed by Mr. Justice Thomas Berger is an example of his belief that he was responsible to use the information he had gained from the native people to their benefit. Similarly, he had previously appeared in court on behalf of Coast Salish spirit dancers, sharing with the court the fund of knowledge and understanding he had acquired over many years of attendance as a guest at the dances.

President Peter Williams attests here to Wilson Duff's scrupulous adherence in the first part of his career, at the Provincial Museum, to his agreement with the Kitwancool to publish their histories, territories and laws. It should be noted that in the second half of his career, at the University of British Columbia, he also carried out, as a conscious commitment, the additional stipulation that these facts should be "used in the highest educational institutions of the Province, to teach future generations of white and native students about Kitwancool."

Duff's status as an expert in Northwest Coast art is universally recognized. What may not be so well appreciated is the role he played in the recent development of this art. In 1950 the tradition was moribund. After decades of neglect or even overt attempts to destroy it, only a tiny handful of elderly artists were still alive who had been properly apprenticed in the tradition. Most of the "Northwest Coast" work still being produced for the curio trade was of poor to mediocre quality and lacked true understanding of the art's rules and forms.

By establishing the carving programme at Thunderbird Park in Victoria with the great Mungo Martin as chief carver, Wilson provided one of the chief instruments by which the decline was stopped and turned around, leading to the rich new flowering of good, even great, Northwest Coast art that is being produced today by several fine young Indian artists. Wilson gave personal encouragement and advice to several of these young people at the beginnings of their careers and some of them have contributed prints to this volume. The early days of Thunderbird Park were a rich period socially as Mungo and Abaya Martin and their son David were joined by Henry Hunt as Mungo's assistant, with Henry's wife Helen and their large family. Others, like Thomas, Emma, and George Hunt, also joined the Victoria Kwakiutl colony whose nucleus was Thunderbird Park. It was a creative community not only in artistic production but also in its social and traditional ceremonial activities.

D.N.A.

Mungo Martin, Carver of the Century

Wilson Duff

Reprinted from *Museum News*
Vol. 1, No. 1; May 1959

Towering above the grounds of the new Maritime Museum (in Vancouver) is the magnificent Centennial Totem Pole, a massive, 100-foot cedar column boldly carved and painted with symbols of British Columbia's Indian past. Dominating Great Windsor Park in England is its exact duplicate, erected there as a gift to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth from the people of the Province. This most imposing pair of totem poles ever carved will stand through the next century as striking reminders of British Columbia's first centenary. They will also stand as memorials to the remarkable man who created and carved them, Mungo Martin.

The idea of carving these two poles originated with the Vancouver Centennial committee. It very soon became obvious that Mungo Martin was the only logical man to carve them, and he was eager to accept the challenge. For most of his life he had practiced the wood-carving art of his people, the Kwakiutl. In 1947 he had begun a series of carving projects at the University of British Columbia, restoring old totem poles and creating new ones. Since 1952, he had worked in Victoria as chief carver for the Provincial Museum's totel pole restoration programme in Thunderbird Park, a position he still holds. The carving of the Centennial poles was readily made a part of this programme, and Mungo Martin was asked to create the design. He had a certain amount of assistance of a practical and administrative nature, and he had strong young men to help him with the actual carving, notably the talented Henry Hunt, but the act of creation was his own. The days ahead were to bring great events in his life: the dedication ceremonies, the visit to England and presentation to the Queen Mother, the many occasions which brought public acclaim. He enjoys such events, they are now happy memories for him. But in addition to these memories he will always carry in his mind a deep satisfaction, the satisfaction of the artist who has crowned his career with a great masterpiece.

I have always hesitated to pay my personal tribute to this great man, mostly because of my fear of doing it inadequately. Yet from several years of daily association I have had the opportunity to know him, and to know the culture out of which he came, as few others could. I have been his "boss" in Thunderbird Park since his arrival in Victoria in 1952. I have been his friend, advisor, intermediary, secretary, announcer, and interpreter (not interpreting from English to Kwakiutl, but from the incomprehensible English of officials, journalists, and visiting anthropologists into Mungo's English, and vice versa). My training in anthropology has enabled me to surmount at times the barriers of speech and thought between men of different cultures, and to glimpse an unusually active and intelligent mind intent on fulfilling a different self-defined mission in life. Writing with the perspective of 3000 miles distance and many months absence (on an extended visit to Ottawa), I may perhaps be excused the personal note that intrudes upon these comments on the life and work of Mungo Martin.

Mungo was born at Fort Rupert, which today is a very small, almost deserted Kwakiutl community close to Port Hardy, but which was then a large village centring on a busy Hudson's Bay Company post. (There is no disrespect in using his first name; even his grandchildren call him Mungo.) Like most of his generation, his birth was not registered, so that he is not certain of his exact age. He knows that he was born in the spring, when the people were preparing to leave for Knight Inlet to fish for eulachons, and from his earliest recollections of other people of known age, he believes the year was 1881 or 1882. For official purposes, however, he lists his birthdate as April 1884. His father's name was Yanukwalas ("nobody leaves his house without a gift"), but the whites for convenience called him Martin, and by the usual practise of the time this became the surname of his children. Yanukwalas was not a "real" Kwakiutl, but belonged to the Kwiksutinuk tribe of Gilford Island. He happened to live at Fort Rupert because his own father had moved there after a war party of Bella Coolas, armed with muskets obtained from early white traders, had massacred most of his tribe. Mungo's mother was Nagaygi ("mountain of wealth"), also known as Sarah Finlay, the daughter of a Kwakiutl woman and George Finlay, a Scot who worked for the Hudson's Bay. Finlay moved away after his wife's death and he wanted to take his daughter Sarah with him, but her Kwakiutl relatives insisted on keeping her, and he had to be content with sending her a gift every Christmas. Mungo was the second of four sons, one of whom died in infancy. His older brother Spruce lived until a dozen years ago; his younger brother Herbert is still alive. From the second marriage of his mother, to the famous carver Charlie James, Mungo has two half sisters.

In a very real sense, Mungo has had to live two lives, for he has had roles to play in two different societies. In Canadian society he was regarded as little more than an uneducated native fisherman until recent years, when his abilities as a Kwakiutl artist and informant began to bring him recognition and honour. In Kwakiutl society, in contrast, his status has been high and his position secure all through his life. Every Kwakiutl of any importance assumed a whole series of hereditary names of higher and higher rank as he went through life. So far, Mungo has had eight. His first name was Kasalas ("proficient on the shore"), and his latest and highest is Naqapenkum ("ten times chief"). His others—they all lose much in the translation—have been Yayakalas ("always has a house full of wealth"), Gwoyimsi ("big whale"), Tlathbai ("leader of a school of whales"), Siekwalas ("proficient on the sea"), Kisuyakulis ("great ceremony"), and Hinakyalasu ("invulnerable to ridicule"). Spruce Martin outranked Mungo and held the name Naqapenkim until his death. Now Mungo holds the highest name and rank in his clan.

Mungo was born into Kwakiutl society when it was still functioning although it was no longer functioning normally. Even in earlier times it had been a competitive society; now it had become obsessed with the competition among its members for positions of high social rank. Each of the two dozen Kwakiutl tribes consisted of a number of enlarged family groups which may roughly be called clans, and each clan owned a number of important names. The names in each clan, the clans in each tribe, and even the tribes themselves came to be arranged in a definite order of rank. Each name was a step of the ladder of success, and every Kwakiutl climbed as high as his family connections and wealth would permit. His first name was one belonging to his father's clan. Later, if he could trace a relationship through either parent to a more important name in any clan, and if he had the wealth to give the feast and potlatch necessary to legalize such a step, he assumed the higher name and the rank that went with it. With the declining population of the 19th century, more names were open then ever before. Furthermore, the presence of the whites opened up new ways of acquiring wealth for potlatching purposes. This was the time of the greatest potlatches and winter ceremonies, and of the fiercest "fighting with property." (On the one hand the white authorities encouraged the industry of the Kwakiutl, and on the other they tried to suppress potlatching, apparently not aware of the basic contradiction in such a policy.) This last flourish of Kwakiutl culture was accompanied by lavish developments in sculpture, painting, music, stagecraft and oratory, and that is the culture Mungo Martin represents.

Mungo's generation of Kwakiutl more than any before or since was caught in the conflict between two ways of life. Every individual had to find his own equilibrium in this conflict, and to choose one direction or another: to listen to his elders and cherish the old culture or to listen to the white men and renounce it. Mungo took his stand with the dwindling number of conservatives; to him there was too much that was good in the old culture to disown it. Quite early in life he became known as a fine carver of masks and totem poles and an authority on complex matters of ceremony. First his mother and then other old people taught him the traditions, songs, and crafts which express the history and the arts of his people. More and more clans came to be dependent on him to remember their portions of this cultural heritage. Family historics, feast songs, war songs, love songs, gambling songs: in his remarkable memory he filed and catalogued them all. All the clans of all the tribes of the Kwakiutl are represented there. Today he is the outstanding authority on all aspects of the Kwakiutl past, and is guilty of only slight overstatement, if any, when he says sadly "Nobody knows now, only me."

His is the disciplined memory of the wise man of the days before written records provided an easy substitute for remembering. He can commit all manner of subjects to memory. For example, he remembers Navajo songs taught to him by two other Kwakiutls who learned them at the St. Louis Exposition in 1898. We recently recorded his version of the story of Geronimo, learned from the same source. He remembers songs in Haida and Tsimshian despite the fact that he does not understand the words as he sings them.

In contrast to his thorough education in all Kwakiutl matters, Mungo's formal education in English was exceedingly limited. His schooling was restricted to a period of about two weeks when he was ten years old. There was no school in Fort Rupert, the closest one was the residential school at Alert Bay. One day Mungo made the mistake of using his loaded rifle to club a coon in a trap and shot himself in the leg, and when his worried parents took him to Alert Bay for medical care, it seemed like a good idea to start him in school. Mungo disagreed. He was not happy in school. His injured leg hampered him, especially after the other boys discovered that his crutches made fascinating playthings. At the first opportunity Mungo caught a ride back to Fort Rupert. Some years later Mungo gained a fine tutor when his mother married Charlie James, who had been born and educated in Victoria, but the curriculum was hardly that to which he would have been exposed in a school. The main lessons were in carving and painting. Writing was also included, not in English but in Kwakiutl, using the phonetic alphabet developed by the Reverend Mr. Hall. Today Mungo reads a little, writes a little, and speaks a little English, and finds that quite enough. He doesn't want to be a white man.

I do not mean to suggest that Mungo could not make the best use of the white man's inventions when it served his purpose to do so. After all, he did have to make his living in the white man's world. He became a successful commercial fisherman, one of the first of his tribe to use a power-driven boat, and the first (in 1925) to run a diesel engine. Once, using a handsaw, and sheer ingenuity, he converted a two-cylinder engine into a single-cylinder engine—or so he told me. With equal ingenuity he could transform the noses of sea-lions into those of seals, and collect the bounty. I am quite sure he was the first of his tribe to own and use a tape recorder. Learning the potentialities of this machine through his association with anthropologists, he purchased one in 1954, and he is still working systematically at the task of transferring hundreds of songs from his mental storehouse to the more permanent memory of magnetic tape.

During his stay in Victoria, Mungo has been living in alien surroundings, a visitor from a foreign culture. He has had to accept many invitations, and endure such loneliness and homesickness that it would not have been bearable if several of his relatives had not moved to the city with him. Aside from them he has had many friends but little real company. His loneliness is evident in the translation of a speech he made to the Kwakiutl chiefs whom he brought to Victoria for the opening ceremonies of his potlatch house in Thunderbird Park in 1953. To ensure that the dances and other ceremonies would be properly performed, he arranged several rehearsals in advance. At the end of one such rehearsal Mungo realized that the ceremonies were going to be successful. He addressed his master of ceremonies and the visiting tribesmen:

> Now Nuknenes, now we are finished. That is the way I wanted you to come. Thank you. Thank you chiefs. You have put strength into me, for I was very weak all by myself away from home. I almost cry sometimes when there is nobody here to help me.
>
> And you have come to help, you with your famous names, you chiefs. You have strengthened me. Your fame will spread because you are here. You have strength, for you know everything. You too have been left to take up the duties which have been passed on to you. So you will help me to finish what I want to do.

The ceremonies were a resounding success. Mungo insisted that for this last time all the traditional procedures would be followed in sequence, although compressed in time. Visiting anthropologists were amazed to see the colour and pageantry of Kwakiutl ceremony return out of the past before their eyes. To Mungo this was a real—and expensive—potlatch. His Indian guests came from all the tribes of the coast, or as his "speaker" Omhed phrased it: "from one side of the world to the other." Mungo gave ancestral names to all his grandchildren. Every guest received a gift, and people of his own tribe received substantial potlatch payments. The next day Mungo proudly displayed the ceremonies of his people to an assembly of dignitaries and the few hundred people who crowded into the Indian house (many hundreds more had to be turned away). With great satisfaction he saw that the events were recorded on tape recorders and in notebooks. These were Mungo's greatest days in Victoria until the completion of the Centennial totem poles.

Mungo has a direct and simple dignity that is always fitting to the occasion, whether it may be meeting a visiting dignitary or giving a speech in his native language. It was evident on the day when Governor General Vincent Massey paid a brief, unscheduled visit to Thunderbird Park. After a short conversation, Mungo spontaneously removed his cedarbark headband and tied it on His Excellency's head, "because I liked that man." Mr. Massey was obviously delighted. It is also evident whenever Mungo, resplendent in his button blanket and headdress, stands up to make a speech. On such occasions Provincial Government dignitaries in the audience have been observed to squirm somewhat uneasily in their seats. Mungo happily chooses not to stumble through "a few brief words" in English, but graces the occasion with a proper oration in Kwakiutl. As it always comes out in Helen Hunt's able translation, Mungo was not demanding the country back from the white invaders after all, but was only saying the proper things in the proper way.

New facets of his character and abilities appear even after years of acquaintance. Presented with paints and a pad of drawing paper he quickly produced a series of unique paintings of mythical sea and land creatures, within the Kwakiutl artistic tradition but bearing his own personal stamp.[1] His host of an evening needs only to give him a piece of string, and he will entertain for hours by constructing the intricate string figures usually called "cats cradles" which we no longer seem to have the time to teach our children. Then again, at a Christmas meeting of the Indian Arts and Welfare Society, he offered to sing a hymn in his own language. He stood up, waited in his characteristic way until the silence was brittle, and sang in a clear tenor several verses of a hymn which an early missionary had transcribed into Kwakiutl. I had heard him sing scores of Indian songs, but here the voice and idiom were different. Here was one more facet of this remarkable man.

Mungo's realistic mind is not burdened with the bitterness which many old Indians hold for the white men who have taken their country and destroyed their way of life. He regrets that the arrival of the new civilization had such destructive effects on his people and their culture but he accepts the situation as it is. Furthermore, he has assigned himself the task of preserving all he knows of Kwakiutl culture. Whether it is by knife and adze, paintbrush, on the tape recorder or in the notebooks of his anthropologist friends, he is determined that his knowledge will be recorded for posterity. In my view, this objective appraisal of the situation and this conscious dedication to preserve the culture of his people are Mungo Martin's clearest claims to true greatness.

Mungo Martin has a secure place in the history of British Columbia. His totem poles will stand as monuments to his carving skill for as long as wood can be preserved. Few others will leave such lasting monuments, and few will be remembered so long.

---

[1] One of these is shown on page 292 of this book.

Wilson Duff:
He Used to
Call Us Together

Thomas, Emma and George Hunt

He used to call us together—he made home made beer—he used to invite us over to have a big party—we'd play that bone game—give us a good time—

I wasn't even carving for him—but he used to invite us all together anyway. That's how good he was to us.

—anyways when he died we missed him very much—we were very sorry about what happened to him—

because not only us but a lot of people used to go see him—

Wilson Duff: A Tribute

George Clutesi

Most writers will say he was a tolerant man.
They will speak the truth, for to the masses
He was indeed a tolerant man, and compassionate.
In his meditations he sought higher aspirations
And achieved a goal seldom reached by men.
He was honoured to taste, as it were,
The sweet fruits of empathy.
He was indeed a man.
He was Wilson Duff.

In his studies Wilson Duff was determined to include the more admirable human qualities usually ignored by other anthropologists; moreover he had the courage to do so. He left us many publications for our pleasure and more knowledgeable authorities will attest to these.

Wilson Duff's observations revealed many aspects of the subject he chose to pursue: The study of man and his behaviour.

As an example he boldly maintained in his conversations with his subjects, the West Coast Indians of Vancouver Island, that they undoubtedly possessed knowledge of navigation, utilizing the positions of stars, the relations of angles and the square. Moreover this remarkable man sensed and believed that these sea-faring people had discovered the principle of dead-centre (perfect symmetry) and utilized this knowledge in sculpturing their sea-faring canoes (to mention only one product perfected in line and symmetry through the utilization of the dead-centre principle).

There was also a practical side to this man's vision. For instance, during the preparations and final planning of the building of the Indian Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal ten selected Indian artists/artisans were brought in to help enhance the huge structure with Indian paintings, murals, totems and artifacts. As is expected and proper, knowledgeable authorities spoke to the Indian artists ostensibly to encourage them to do their utmost while making their individual contributions to this their own edifice. The first speaker spoke with utmost authority. He had every right to do so. He was the boss.

The second speaker was a young man whose age fell far short of that of his audience. His opening remarks left the artists who were deemed Canada's top men in their respective fields somewhat cold or "turned off."

Wilson Duff who was to be the last lecturer did not speak; perhaps because the young man's pedantry may have dampened his own enthusiasm as it most certainly did the native-Indians'. Whatever, I am sure that every one of the listening artists felt a closer kinship towards Wilson Duff for his silence under the circumstances.

Because of his practical, down-to-earth philosophy towards human nature he may not have given the same emphasis to many of the standard concerns of anthropology as did his colleagues. Instead he emphasized aspects of positive value to the people he studied. He pointed out that at the time of first European contact the British Columbia Indians were among the worlds most distinctive peoples. They had developed a culture to higher peaks than in any other part of the continent north of Mexico!

True a terrible decline occurred following the initial impact with the European culture so much so that would-be authorities on ethnology wrote volumes on the "vanishing American."

Wilson Duff encouraged all those who would listen by simply declaring that the Indian decline is over; that Indian leadership is indeed strengthening and that the present situation should not be used to judge either past Indian cultures or their capabilities for the future.

Moreover he reminded his colleagues: "Our common society has unfinished business—old grievances to be settled; unhealthy attitudes towards Indians to be corrected."

This was Wilson Duff, a friend to all mankind.

Some Thoughts about Wilson Duff

Ron Hamilton
(Hupquatchew)

When I was approached to do a design for this memorial publication in honour of the late Wilson Duff I thought it might be good to try and express in words as well how this man touched the lives of some younger native people. Try as I might I was not able to do so. Instead I have put down some simple "personal" thoughts about this man. I hope by writing them down I can provide a glimpse of how his long interest in the native people of British Columbia affected one individual of that group.

In 1951 Wilson Duff came to Alberni to make moving pictures of the local native people dancing. At that time I wasn't even old enough to be in school yet; but I seem to have a clear memory of a white man in a suit, taking pictures with a large camera.

In 1971, while carving for the British Columbia Provincial Museum, I was asked to help Gary Kent, Ethnology Division, splice together a large box of 16 mm film clippings. After days of hard work we had put together a short piece of coloured film. It made hardly any sense, but did show faces recognizable as belonging to natives from the West Coast, some of them long since passed away.

Only a short while later, the whole film *Alberni Dancers 1951*, was found on top of an unused filing cabinet in the Parliament Buildings across the street from the British Columbia Provincial Museum. We had been piecing together the out-clippings of the very same film. Later I arranged to have the old film shown in Alberni. The showing caused quite a stir among the young and old alike. Today, almost ten years later, I still hear comments about that viewing of the film.

In my childhood years I used to visit my aunty and uncle, at the opposite end of the reserve frequently. My uncle, George Clutesi, would often be lying on his bed with a big heavy machine at his side. It always seemed to be working. It had two wheels that went round and round, very slowly. As they turned I could recognize the voices of our elders singing our songs. The machine just had to be started and Nanny Kate, Jimmy Gallick, Billy Yukum, Gus Tutiismis, Tukwart Jim or Milly Thomas, among others, could be heard. They might be singing centuries old songs telling epic stories, or just laughing. My uncle has since told me that he has found these old tapes invaluable when his memory has failed him. He still uses them for references, and many others now enjoy listening to them as well.

Much of the encouragement I got, while learning to sing, I got from my Uncle George. In his own way Wilson helped my uncle to preserve our precious songs. He gave that tape recorder to my uncle to use as he saw fit. And use it he did, often. His pleasure was my gain.

In the late 1960s, I remember going to Vancouver for the British Columbia Native Brotherhoods' annual assembly. One of the main topics on the agenda was Native Indian Land Claims; and one of the main speakers was Mr. Wilson Duff. He read a paper he had written on the legal and historical justification for our claiming ownership of the resources of this province. He made it very clear he was no lawyer, and that these were raw ideas, but still he spoke with conviction and sincerity. I was very surprised that a man of his station, and reputation, would make such a strong "political" statement. His ideas were received with much enthusiasm.

I remember also looking at the catalogue for the show, "Arts of the Raven," knowing that Wilson had written the text. I was disappointed that the show didn't include the work of old West Coast masters; but I enjoyed the catalogue all the same. One comment from that text stays with me. About Gallery 1 Faces, he wrote, "There were faces of men possessed, and spirits, and animals and supernatural creatures as grotesque as the mind can imagine."

Since the creators of these ritual paraphernalia were often making statements about the process of life their imagery was necessarily poetic. They studied life and tried to understand it. Aboriginal life on our coast must have been, at times, a very trying affair. Men soothed themselves with rhythms found in nature; the cycles of the sun and moon, the seasons, ocean tides, life and death, spawning salmon, good fortune and bad fortune. The native calender was filled with one ceremonial occasion after another. Certain men spent their entire lives preparing for and taking part in these poetic portrayals of life's cycles. They wanted to illustrate for young initiates what life, as an adult, might hold for them.

It seems to me that Wilson was as struck by the poetry of our creative forms as their creators were struck by the poetry that is life. Years later (1975) in another catalogue, *Images Stone B.C.*, he said about these poetic forms or images, "Images seem to speak to the eye, but they are really addressed to the mind. The eye can sometimes be satisfied with meaning. . . ."

In the early 1970s, I heard from a few acquaintances that Wilson was using one of my silkscreened prints in a course he was teaching at the University of British Columbia. The print, *Satsup* was meant to illustrate a story about my great grandmother, from Hiikulth. It depicts a nude, obviously young, woman inside a large spawning spring salmon. I remember being quite flattered that he thought enough of my design to use it. This was encouraging, at a time when I got little encouragement from the people around me.

In our personal conversations we never strayed off the subject of Northwest Coast Indian art. Wilson liked to talk about the old stuff: dances, carving, songs, rituals, beliefs, things like that. I can't remember once discussing my own contemporary work with him. He seemed to want to understand the minds of the "old masters" so badly, especially Edensaw.

I remember a field trip to Cape Alava, Washington State. I picture a van-load of interested people including Hilary Stewart, Don Abbott, Carl Borden, Peter Macnair and myself, among others. On the highway, between Port Angeles and Lake Ozette, someone (I think it was Don Abbott) read a letter from Wilson, excusing himself for his absence. In the note Wilson said he was spending the week with the "old man"; his personal nickname for Charlie Edensaw. The van filled with laughter, and someone chuckled that he had gone too far this time.

Once in a discussion at Peter Macnair's home, he asked if I thought Charlie Edensaw might have been influenced by West Coast design. He noted the long flat, round-ended eye sockets Edensaw used on some silver and argillite pieces. He also mentioned the loose feeling of some of Edensaw's designs, and the fact that on trading trips the Haidas and West Coast people mixed for periods of time in Victoria. "Do you think Edensaw might have been influenced by West Coast design?" Wilson often asked questions that just couldn't be answered!

Perhaps this publication will provide us with some answers—about his work, his mind, his life. Perhaps we will be challenged to understand his poetry.

Tribute of The Kitwancool

Peter Williams

PRESIDENT OF KITWANCOOL

During his life, Wilson Duff was a very prominent anthropologist, boldly truthful and never biased. When he dealt with the Indian histories and rights of this land, he did it resolutely, profoundly and with intense care. In this way, our most respected judges recognized and respected him.

His voice was soft and gentle, but firm in truth and honour.

The late Professor Duff was the editor of the book *Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool.* (Anthropology in B.C. Memoir No. 4, 1959)

This book contains an agreement between the people of Kitwancool and the Provincial Museum of British Columbia. The Kitwancool people wished to preserve their totem poles and, furthermore, they desired that their authentic history, the stories of their totem poles, their social organization, territories and laws be written down, published and used in the highest educational institutions of the Province, to teach future generations of white and native students about Kitwancool.

Mr. Wilson Duff was one of the signatories on behalf of the Provincial Museum of British Columbia. Walter Derrick, Chief Councillor for Kitwancool signed the agreement on behalf of the Kitwancool, and I, as President of Kitwancool, signed as a witness.

This agreement was signed in Hazelton, B.C. on March 24, 1958, in the presence of W. Baily, Indian Agent. This was one of the greatest accomplishments of Wilson Duff.

Professor Duff's honour and his faithful work will remain in our memory and go down in our history.[1]

"The publication of this book is one step in the fulfilment of an agreement between the Kitwancool and the Provincial Museum of British Columbia...

"In the spring of 1958 Wilson Duff and Michael Kew, representing the Provincial Museum of British Columbia Totem Pole Preservation Committee, visited Kitwacool to negotiate the removal of a small number of totem-poles for permanant preservation. Discussions with representatives of the Kitwancool had been carried on in previous years, but up to that time no totem-pole had ever been removed from the village. The Kitwancool chiefs did not consider it proper, under any circumstances, to sell their totem-poles outright.

"Accordingly, we made a new kind of offer: that for each old pole we removed for preservation, a new and exact copy, carved in Victoria, would be returned and erected in the village. A meeting of the chiefs and people of Kitwancool accepted this proposal, but added one further condition: that their histories, territories and laws were to be written down, published, and made available to the University for teaching purposes. Since that described precisely one of the functions the museum is trying to perform, we were happy to agree...

"The manuscript was prepared in typewritten form and submitted to the Kitwancool for their approval. It was returned ... with a number of minor corrections and additions. ... The corrected manuscript was then prepared for publication."

---

[1] The following is from the book's preface, written by Wilson Duff.

Wilson Duff and Native Land Claims

Thomas R. Berger
SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wilson Duff played an important role in the development of native claims in British Columbia and in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. He was a key witness in two very important cases that were brought before the courts in support of aboriginal rights. I speak, of course, of *R. v. White & Bob*[1] and *Calder v. Attorney-General of B.C.* (the Nishga case).[2]

I began working with Wilson Duff in 1963. Even then his knowledge of the history of the Indian people of our province was highly regarded, his reputation as a scholar approaching its pinnacle. He was well acquainted with the history of the Indian land question in British Columbia. In fact, in his book, *The Indian History of B.C.*,[3] he said—at a time when the Indian land question would have seemed of merely academic interest to many—that it was not closed, that indeed it had "to an increasing extent formed a rallying point for a growing Indian 'nationalism'."[4] His view was based on his profound knowledge of Indian ideas of tribal title, and the fact that those ideas were not moribund, but still informed Indian notions of their own past and present. In *R. v. White & Bob* and in *Calder v. Attorney-General of B.C.* the anthropological history he knew so well was used to flesh out the legal concept of aboriginal title. His evidence demonstrated the uses of anthropological evidence in the adumbration of native rights under Canadian law. In the United States such evidence had been admitted before the Indian Claims Commission, but not in cases before the ordinary courts. In Canada it had not been considered at all.

It is necessary to say something about the facts of these two cases in order to understand the significance of Duff's contribution. Let me deal with the *White & Bob* case first. Clifford White and David Bob were both Indians, living on a reserve near Nanaimo. Clifford White had nine children, David Bob had four children. On Sunday, July 7, 1963, they had gone out hunting for food for their families.

White and Bob did not have far to go to find deer. A few miles inland from Nanaimo, on the south slope of Mount Benson, they shot six black-tailed deer, a species of small deer found in large numbers on Vancouver Island. They were on their way back to the reserve with the deer when they were stopped by the Game Warden and charged under the *Game Act of British Columbia*.[5] It was the closed season. The *Game Act* said they could not hunt during the closed season. The law made no exception for a man with a hungry family.

The charge against them was that they were in possession of deer during the closed season. They came before the magistrate at Nanaimo on September 25, 1963. They were tried, found guilty, and ordered to pay a fine of $100.00 each and in default to serve 40 days imprisonment. David Bob and his family managed to put up $100.00 to cover his fine, but Clifford White could not. So he was sent to Oakalla Prison Farm to serve his 40-day sentence. Maisie Hurley, a great friend of the native people, arranged for funds to pay his fine. He was released before the completion of his sentence.

The case caused great resentment among the native people on southern Vancouver Island. Indeed it gave rise to the formation of the Southern Vancouver Island Tribal Federation. I was asked to represent White and Bob on appeal to the County Court of Nanaimo. The appeal was brought with the support of the Federation (and later with the support of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia as well).

The Indians at Nanaimo told me they had a right to hunt under an old treaty. If there were such a treaty, that would make a difference. The *Indian Act*, a federal statute,[6] provided that provincial laws of general application should apply to Indians subject to treaty. If a treaty existed, guaranteeing the hunting rights of the Nanaimo Indians, they would have a defence to the charge brought under the *Game Act*. The courts have always held that where federal and provincial legislation relates to the same subject-matter, the federal legislation is paramount. The federal legislation, in this case the *Indian Act*, would take precedence over the provincial legislation, the *Game Act*.

---

[1] *Regina v. White and Bob* (1965), 52 W.W.R. (N.S.) 193 (B.C.C.A.), affirmed (1966), 52 D.L.R. (2d) 481.

[2] *Calder v. Attorney-General of B.C.*, (1974) S.C.R. 1; (1974), 34 D.L.R. (3d) 145; on appeal from the B.C. Court of Appeal (1971), 13 D.L.R. (3d) 64; (1970), 74 W.W.R. 481; dismissing an appeal from Gould, J. of the S.C.B.C. (1970), 8 D.L.R. (3d) 59; (1970), 71 W.W.R. 81.

[3] *Indian History of British Columbia*, Volume 1, Queen's Printer, 1965.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[5] R.S.B.C. 1960, c. 142.

The published *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question 1850-1975*[7] contained 14 conveyances by the Indians to the Hudson's Bay Company—but no conveyance by the Indians at Nanaimo. These conveyances reserved the right of the Indians to hunt and fish for food for themselves and their families. In any event, it was open to question whether these conveyances were treaties. They were purchases of land negotiated by the Hudson's Bay Company. If the Hudson's Bay Company had agreed that the Indians could hunt and fish on unoccupied Crown lands, where did that get us? Treaties were made with the Crown, not with the Hudson's Bay Company.

In order to understand why the Hudson's Bay Company was obtaining conveyances from the Indians, we had to examine the history of the colonization of the North Pacific coast. The first settlement on Vancouver Island was established by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Victoria in 1843. James Douglas was the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, a man who had been raised among the Indian people and had in fact married an Indian woman. In 1849 the Crown conveyed the whole of Vancouver Island to the Hudson's Bay Company. In the same year the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island was established. Richard Blanshard was appointed the first Governor of the Colony. But Douglas was the most powerful figure in the Colony, because the Hudson's Bay Company was itself all-powerful, and in 1851 Blanshard resigned. The Colonial Office appointed Douglas to replace him.

As Chief Factor, and then as Governor, Douglas believed that it was essential to obtain surrenders of their land from the Indians. There were a number of reasons for this. The Indians were far more numerous than the few white settlers inhabiting Vancouver Island at the time. Douglas realized that the Indians claimed that the land comprising Vancouver Island belonged to them. If the settlers were going to acquire land for farming, it would have to be from the Indians. It had always been Britain's policy, in the settlement of North America, to obtain a surrender of Indian title before settlement proceeded. It was a policy made explicit in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The government of the United States, following the War of Independence, followed the same policy. In carrying out this policy Britain and the United States had entered into treaties with the Indians.

Douglas therefore obtained conveyances of land from the Indians in and around Victoria. As settlement extended northward, along the east coast of the Island, he obtained conveyances from the Indians wherever the settlers wanted to establish their farms. Douglas explained how he went about this in his dispatches to the Colonial Office:[8] At a meeting with the chiefs and the people of each tribe, he would explain to the Indians that he wanted their land. He told them he did not want their village sites, nor did he want their cultivated fields. But he did want the remainder of their land. He told them, however, that they would always have the right to hunt over all of the unoccupied lands they were giving up, and the right to carry on their fisheries.

What did he have to pay them? Practically nothing. A few pounds, and some Hudson's Bay blankets. In exchange, he received a formal surrender of their territory, allowing settlement to go forward.

These conveyances may be seen today in the Provincial Archives. They are published in the *Papers*. The words of these instruments are always the same. The following[9] is the conveyance (dated February 7, 1852) obtained from the Indians of South Saanich:

> SAANICH TRIBE—SOUTH SAANICH.
>
> Know all men that we, the chiefs and people of the Saanich Tribe, who have signed our names and made our marks to this deed on the sixth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two, do consent to surrender, entirely and for ever to James Douglas, the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company in Vancouver Island, that is to say, for the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee of the same, the whole of the lands situate and lying between Mount Douglas and Cowichan Head, on the Canal de Haro, and extending thence to the line running through the centre of Vancouver Island, North and South.
>
> The condition of or understanding of this sale is this, that our village sites and enclosed fields, are to be kept for our own use, for the use of our children, and for those who may follow after us; and the land shall be properly surveyed hereafter. It is understood, however, that the land itself, with these small exceptions, becomes the entire property of the white people for ever; it is also under-

---

[6] R.S.C. 1952, c. 260.

[7] Richard Wolfenden, Government Printer, 1885.

[8] Provincial Archives.

[9] *Papers*, *supra*, p. 10.

> stood that we are at liberty to hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on our fisheries as formerly.
>
> We have received, as payment, Forty-one pounds thirteen shillings and four pence.
>
> In token whereof, we have signed our names and made our marks, at Fort Victoria, on the 7th day of February, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two.
>
> (Signed) WHUT-SAY-MULLET his X mark.
> and 9 others.

Each of these documents was written in longhand, by a clerk employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. All of the Indian men in each tribe would sign. Of course none of them could write, so each made an "X", and the clerk wrote the name of each Indian beside his "X" mark.

The question was, could we claim, on behalf of White and Bob, the benefit of the reservation in favour of Indian hunting and fishing rights in these conveyances, a reservation not limited to the closed season? The difficulty lay in this: Though the land was to become "the entire property of the white people forever" the surrender itself was a surrender to "James Douglas, the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company," not "James Douglas, the Governor of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island." So how could these conveyances be regarded as treaties?

There was another problem. Though 13 of these conveyances had been obtained between 1850 and 1852,[10] there was no such conveyance at Nanaimo. Only a piece of paper,[11] with signatures upon it, but nothing written above them, appeared in the *Papers*. There was, however, in the Provincial Archives, a paper[12] that had been signed at Fort Nanaimo on December 23, 1854, by Governor Douglas and by a large number of Indians. We counted the "X" marks; there were 159. But the Indians were not called the Nanaimo Indians. They were called the Saalequun Tribe. And the body of the paper was blank. There were only the marks of the men who signed it, and beside each man's mark, the number of blankets he was to receive was listed. The Indians got 638 blankets in all. They did not receive any money, just the blankets.

We did not know what Douglas and these Indians at Fort Nanaimo had agreed to in 1854. But even if we were able to find out, what good would it do Clifford White and David Bob? How could we show that they were the descendants of the Indians who had signed the conveyances? White and Bob were Nanaimo Indians, not Saalequuns.

We enlisted Willard Ireland, the Provincial Archivist and an eminent historian, in the search for the true meaning of the document. He found a letter that Archibald Barclay, the Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, had sent to Douglas in December 1849. In it Barclay authorized Douglas to make treaties or conveyances with the Indians. He gave him copious instructions with regard to compensating the Indians for their land, the chief object of these instructions being to ensure that the scale of compensation should be limited. Then Barclay went on to say:

> The natives will be confirmed in the possession of their lands as long as they occupy and cultivate them themselves, but will not be allowed to sell or dispose of them to any private person, the right to the entire soil having been granted to the Company by the Crown.

He continued:

> The right of fishing and hunting will be continued to them, and when their lands are registered, and they conform to the same conditions with which other settlers are required to comply, they will enjoy the same rights and privileges.

These instructions were given in 1849, before any of the conveyances had been obtained. Clearly Douglas had followed them in obtaining the 13 surrenders. Here was an indication that Douglas must have promised the Indians at Nanaimo that they would continue to have the right to hunt over their ancient tribal territory.

Then we looked at a dispatch Douglas had sent on May 16, 1850, acknowledging Barclay's instructions. Douglas told him that he had already made three purchases with Indian bands in and around Fort Victoria. He had arranged these purchases, at a total cost to the Hudson's Bay Company's exchequer of £150.3.4d. Then he said:

> I informed the natives that they would not be disturbed in the possession of their Village sites and enclosed fields, which are of small extent, and they were at liberty to hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on their fisheries with the same freedom as when they were the sole occupants of the country.

These conveyances do in fact faithfully reflect Douglas' promises regarding the right of the Indians to continue to hunt and to fish. He concluded his dispatch:

> I attached the signatures of the native Chief's and others who subscribed the deed of purchase to a blank piece on which will be copied the contract or Deed of conveyance, as soon as we receive a proper form, which I beg may be sent out by return of Post. The other matters referred to in your letter will be duly attended to.

---

[10] *Papers*, pp. 5-11.

[11] Provincial Archives.

[12] Provincial Archives.

Thus it appeared that Douglas had gotten the first three conveyances signed on blank sheets of paper, and when the proper form of wording to be used had been sent from London, he had arranged for the actual words of the conveyances to be filled in. If he had done that in 1850, why not in 1854 at Nanaimo? It meant that in 1854 he might well have followed the same procedure, except that he never got around to filling in the terms of the "contract" with the Indians at Nanaimo. It would explain why the instrument made in 1854 consisted of simply a piece of paper with the signatures of the Indians written upon it, and nothing more. And, of course, the document signed was intended to include the same provisions as the others. There had been 14 conveyances, not 13.

Thus we could show that the conveyance obtained in 1854 was obtained on the strength of a promise that the Indians would be entitled to retain their village sites and enclosed fields, and the Indians would have the right to hunt over the unoccupied lands, as well as to carry on their fisheries as before. There were no Indian reserves in those days—the village sites and cultivated fields which the Indians retained under the conveyances were the beginnings of the reserve system in British Columbia. And the right to hunt over the unoccupied lands meant that the Indians had the right to hunt over the whole of their ancient tribal territory wherever the white settlers had not yet occupied the land. All of the 13 conveyances made between 1850 and 1852 had guaranteed, in the same language, the hunting rights of the Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company had given Douglas instructions that the Indians should continue to have the right to hunt, and Douglas had in fact carried out those instructions.

But even if the Saalequuns had retained the right to hunt, how could White and Bob claim any such right? The conveyance had been made at Fort Nanaimo, but who were the Saalequuns, where had they lived, and where had their hunting grounds been?

It was at this point that Willard Ireland and I went to see Wilson Duff at the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria. Duff was at that time Provincial Anthropologist. He said the Saalequuns had lived at Nanaimo, but they were only one of the five tribes living there. There were four other tribes. We did not know whether Clifford White and David Bob were descendants of the Saalequun Tribe or of one of the other tribes; unless we could show that they were descendants of the Saalequuns, we could not claim that they had any right to hunt under the treaty.

Duff looked at the names on the treaty. He told us it would be a good idea if we looked at the census that Governor Douglas had carried out in the early 1850s. We examined Douglas' census[13] and it showed that Douglas was aware that there was more than one tribe at Nanaimo. In fact Douglas' census listed four tribes: the Sumlumalcha, the Whewhulla, the Akmainis and the Saalequun. The census showed that there were 159 "men with beards," 160 women, 300 boys and 324 girls. The figure 159 stood out because there were 159 Indian "X"s on the Nanaimo treaty. Quite obviously the treaty of 1854 had been signed by the men of all the tribes at Nanaimo (whether there were only four, as Douglas thought, or five), not just the Saalequuns. So all the Indians at Nanaimo who could claim descent from any of the tribes that lived there in 1854 could claim the right to hunt. There was no question that White and Bob were descended from Indian people who had lived there in 1854.

White and Bob had already been tried and convicted. But under the *Summary Convictions Act* they had the right to what is called a trial *de novo*—a new trial—in the County Court of Nanaimo. This meant that Ireland and Duff could be called as witnesses in the County Court, and they were.

The trial *de novo* in the County Court began in March 1963, before Judge H. A. Swencisky. During the course of his evidence, Duff laid the groundwork for the argument to be advanced on behalf of White and Bob. He told the Court there had in fact been five local bands, not four as Douglas' census indicated:

> In brief, there were five local bands or groups in this immediate area. They were together known as the Nanaimo tribe. The name of one of these local groups was Saliquin, or Saliquil, or variations of that name. These tribes, or groups, were quite migratory in their habits. Each of them had a village on the Nanaimo River, where he would fish for dog salmon in the fall. In the winter the Sloquin had a winter village right here on Nanaimo Harbour. The other four groups had their winter villages on Departure Bay, quite close by. In the springtime all of these groups would move out to Gabriola Island for various kinds of fish and clams and other food, and in midsummer they would all go over to the Fraser River for other kinds of salmon. Now the name Saloquin correctly applied just to one of these five groups. However, I am convinced that Governor Douglas used the name to apply to the Nanaimo tribe.
>
> BERGER:
> When you say the tribal territories, can you tell us what you mean by that? What use would the Indians have made of their tribal territories?
>
> DUFF:
> This could be a very complicated statement, Your Honour, because they used different kinds of territories in—with different intensity. They would use the rivers, or course, for fish with great intensity,

---

[13] Provincial Archives.

and the beaches with great intensity, and the mountains and forest with somewhat less intensity, yet they would go at least that far back, not only to hunt the land mammal, deer, and also other land mammals, but to get bark and roots for basketry and matting and such things. These territories would be definitely used by them and would be recognized by other tribes as belonging to them.

BERGER:
And Mount Benson (the area—unoccupied Crown land—where White and Bob had shot their deer) would be within the areas the Nanaimo Indians used in 1854 for these purposes?

DUFF:
Mount Benson is so close that there is no doubt but that it would be within the Nanaimo tribes area.

and therefore covered by the reservation of hunting rights contained in the conveyance made in 1854.

So now we had shown that White and Bob were entitled to the benefit of the reservation of Indian hunting rights made in 1854. But of course that would do them no good unless we could establish that the instrument signed in 1854 was a treaty. Because the *Game Act*, which prohibited hunting during the closed season for any purpose, applied to hunters, white or Indian, throughout the province. Only if their hunting rights were guaranteed by a treaty within the meaning of the *Indian Act* would they afford a defence to a charge brought under the *Game Act*. So, was the instrument signed in 1854 a treaty?

We all knew, all along, that the Crown would argue that the conveyance made in 1854 was not a treaty in the legal sense of the word. A treaty can only be made between states, that is, a treaty can only be made between one country and another. The Indians were not a state. They had no international personality in 1854. They were simply the inhabitants of a part of Vancouver Island that was already subject to the sovereignty of the United Kingdom at the time the deed of purchase was signed. The Crown would argue that there was no treaty, merely a contract between the Hudson's Bay Company on the one hand and the Nanaimo Indians on the other hand. They would argue that to describe this arrangement as a treaty would be quite wrong. It might be true that as settlement proceeded west in North America, the Crown had made treaties with the Indians, but these were treaties made by the Crown, not by the Hudson's Bay Company.

British Columbia had never regarded it as necessary to make treaties with the Indians anyway. Once the 14 conveyances that had been obtained from the Indians of Vancouver Island were signed, the policy of obtaining surrenders from the Indians on Vancouver Island and providing compensation and guarantees of native hunting and fishing rights was abandoned (against Douglas' advice), even though vast tracts of lands on Vancouver Island were still occupied by Indians, and the whole of what is now the mainland of British Columbia was occupied by the Indians. The rights of the Indians under these conveyances were never recognized by the Province, nor upheld by the Government of Canada after British Columbia entered Confederation. And the Colony of Vancouver Island, the mainland Colony of British Columbia, the United Colony of British Columbia and the Province of British Columbia have, ever since, taken the position that no surrenders of their land had to be obtained from the Indians, and none ever were. Nor did the Government of Canada ever do so after British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871. There is an exception: In 1899 the federal government obtained the adherence of the Indian people of the Peace River Block to Treaty No. 8, a treaty that had been made with Indians in Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

I argued that the conveyance made in 1854 was indeed a treaty. Douglas was Governor at the time. The intention was that the Indian lands should become "the entire property of the white people forever." The surrender was obtained not only for the benefit of the Hudson's Bay Company but for the Crown itself. In this instance, as in the earlier ones, the Hudson's Bay Company was an agent of Imperial policy. These were treaties, not mere conveyances.

Judge Swencisky of the County Court accepted the evidence of Ireland and Duff, and held for the Indians. He found that the guarantee of hunting rights by the Hudson's Bay Company was binding on the Crown and that the conveyance was indeed a treaty under the *Indian Act*. The British Columbia Court of Appeal, and then the Supreme Court of Canada, upheld the treaty made at Fort Nanaimo in 1854, and vindicated the right of White and Bob to hunt on unoccupied Crown land.

Clifford White and David Bob could claim the right to hunt over their forefathers' lands under the treaty made by Governor Douglas and the Nanaimo Indians in 1854. The *Indian Act of Canada* provided that provincial laws of general application should apply to Indians, subject to any treaty. The treaty having been proved, it took precedence over the *Game Act of British Columbia*. But even though the courts had accepted this argument, it had not been clear all along that they would do so. Suppose they rejected the argument that there was a treaty? Suppose the courts were to hold that the conveyance was not a treaty within the meaning of the *Indian Act*? That would mean that the *Game Act* would apply to them, and that they would have no right to hunt during the closed season.

We could not count on the courts upholding the argument that the instrument signed in 1854 was a treaty, so we had had to consider the alternative argument. This had brought us to the Indian land question. If there was no treaty, if the Indians had no rights under the conveyance, neither did the Province. If the conveyance was a dead letter, then the Indians could say that they had never given up their land. The point was clear enough: It had always been the policy of the Crown that the Indians could not alienate their lands to any one except the Crown. If the Hudson's Bay Company was not obtaining a surrender on behalf of the Crown back in 1854, then no surrender cognizable under the law was ever obtained from the Indians. The whole object of the conveyance was to obtain a surrender of their lands from the Indians; if the Crown did not recognize the instrument as a treaty, then the Indians could stand on their Indian title.

The Indian title was the title by which the Indians of each tribe had the right to hunt over their tribal territory. This was the title they had had for centuries before the coming of the white man. If we could establish that the Indian title has never been extinguished, then we could argue that the right to hunt had never been extinguished, and that the province, in enacting the *Game Act*, had not extinguished it. This really brought us right into the midst of the Indian land question.

The Indian people regarded themselves as the rightful owners of the land when the white people came. If the treaty was no good, then they had never surrendered the land, and they could claim ownership of the land today—and with it the right to hunt.

If it was sound, then it was a daunting theory: The Indians could assert their title not only at Nanaimo but throughout British Columbia, except for Treaty No. 8. For none of the surrenders on southern Vancouver Island would be binding—and there were of course no other surrenders obtained in British Columbia, except for Treaty No. 8.

We could show that the Indian title had been recognized from the beginning: Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, in a dispatch to Governor Douglas in 1859 (after the establishment of the mainland colony of British Columbia in 1858), had given him these instructions with regard to the Indians:

> In the case of the Indians of Vancouver Island, and of British Columbia, Her Majesty's government earnestly wish that when the advancing requirements of colonization press upon the lands occupied by members of that race, measures of liberality and justice may be adopted for compensating them for the territory which they have been taught to regard as their own.

We could also rely upon a dispatch that Governor Douglas had sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on March 25, 1861, accompanying a petition from the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island requesting the aid of the Imperial Government in extinguishing the Indian title. Governor Douglas' dispatch is revealing:

> My Lord Duke
>
> I have the honour of transmitting a Petition from the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island to Your Grace praying for the aid of Her Majesty's Government in extinguishing the Indian Title to the public lands in this Colony: and setting forth, with much force and truth, the evils that may arise from the neglect of that very necessary precaution.
>
> 2. *As the Native Indian population of Vancouver Island have distinct ideas of property in land, and mutually recognize their several exclusive possessory rights in certain districts, they would not fail to regard the occupation of such portions of the Colony by white settlers, unless with the full consent of the proprietary Tribes, as national wrongs: and the sense of injury might produce a feeling of irritation against the Settlers, and perhaps disaffection to the Government, that would endanger the peace of the Country.* (author's emphasis)
>
> 3. Knowing their feelings on that subject, I made it a practice, up to the year 1859, to purchase the Native rights in the land, in every case, prior to the settlement of any District: but since that time in consequence of the termination of the Hudson's Bay Company's Charter, and the want of funds, it has not been in my power to continue it. Your Grace must indeed be well aware that I have, since then, had the utmost difficulty in raising money enough to defray the most indispensable wants of Government.
>
> 4. All the settled Districts of the Colony, with the exception of Cowitchen, Chemainis, and Barclay Sound, have been already bought from the Indians, at a cost in no case exceeding £2.10 sterling for each family. As the land has since then increased in value, the expense would be relatively somewhat greater now, but I think that their claims might be satisfied with a payment of £3 to each family: so that taking the Native population of those districts at 1000 families, the sum of £3000 would meet the whole charge.
>
> 5. It would be improper to conceal from Your Grace the importance of carrying that vital measure into effect without delay.
>
> I have the honour to be
> My Lord Duke
> Your Grace's most obedient
> and humble Servant
> James Douglas

Here was evidence that Governor Douglas was prepared to vouch for the fact that the Indians had their own legal system, and that each tribe had title to its own territory, and that its rights with regard to its territory were recognized by all other tribes.

The petition itself was equally revealing:

> His Grace,
>
> The Duke of Newcastle, Her Majesty's
>
> Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies

WE, Her Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, the members of the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island in Parliament assembled, would earnestly request the attention of Your Grace to the following considerations:

1. THAT many Colonists have purchased land, at the rate of One Pound Sterling per acre, in districts to which the Indian title has not yet been extinguished.

2. THAT, in consequence of the non-extinction of this title, those persons, though most desirous to occupy and improve, have been unable to take possession of their lands—purchased, in most cases, nearly three years ago; and of this they loudly and just complain.

3. THAT the Indians, well aware of the compensation heretofore given for lands, appropriated for colonization, in the earlier settled districts of Vancouver Island, as well as in the neighbouring territory of Washington, strenuously oppose the occupation by settlers of lands still deemed their own. No attempts of the kind could be persisted in, without endangering the peace of the Country, for these Indians, though otherwise well disposed and friendly, would become hostile if their supposed rights as regards land were systematically violated; and they are still much more numerous and warlike, than the petty remnants of tribes, who in 1855 and 1856, in the western part of the adjacent United States territory of Washington, kept up for nearly a year, a desultory and destructive warfare which compelled the whole agricultural population of the Country, to desert their homes, and congregate in blockhouses.

4. THAT within the last three years, this Island has been visited by many intending settlers, from various parts of the world. Comparatively few of these have remained, the others having, as we believe, been, in a great measure, deterred from buying land as they could not rely on having peaceable possession; seeing that the Indian Title was still unextinguished to several of the most eligible agricultural districts of the Island.

5. THAT the House of Assembly respectfully considers, that the extinction of the aboriginal title is obligatory on the Imperial Government.

6. THAT the House of Assembly, bearing in mind, that from the dawn of modern colonization until the present day, wars with aborigines, have mainly arisen from disputes about land, which by timely and moderate concession on the part of the more powerful and enlightened of the disputants concerned, might have been peaceably and economically adjusted; now earnestly pray, that Her Majesty's Government would direct such steps to be taken, as may seem best, for the speedy settlement of the matter at issue, and the removal of a most serious obstacle to the well being of this Colony.

February 6th, 1861

I. S. Helmcken
Speaker

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, though unwilling to comply with the request for aid in extinguishing the Indian title, acknowledged the existence of that title and the necessity for funds being raised for the purpose of obtaining its surrender. Lord Newcastle, then Colonial Secretary, wrote:

Sirs,

I am fully sensible of the great importance of purchasing without loss of time the native title to the soil of Vancouver Island; but the acquisition of the title is a purely colonial interest, and the Legislature must not entertain any expectation that the British taxpayer will be burthened to supply the funds or British credit pledged for the purpose. I would earnestly recommend therefore to the House of Assembly, that they should enable you to procure the requisite means, but if they should not think proper to do so, Her Majesty's Government cannot undertake to supply the money requisite for an object which, whilst it is essential to the interests of the people of Vancouver Island, is at the same time purely Colonial in its character, and trifling in the charge that it would entail.

I have etc.
(signed) NEWCASTLE

In the United States, the great Chief Justice, John Marshall, in a series of famous judgments, had articulated the theoretical basis for Indian Title:

America, separated from Europe by a wide ocean, was inhabited by a distinct people, divided into separate nations, independent of each other and of the rest of the world, having institutions of their own, and governing themselves by their own laws.

It is difficult to comprehend the proposition that the inhabitants of either quarter of the globe could have rightful original claims of dominion over the inhabitants of the other, or over the lands they occupied; or that the discovery of either by the other should give the discoverer rights in the country discovered which annulled the existing rights of its ancient possessors.

Did these adventurers, by sailing along the coast and occasionally landing on it, acquire for the several governments to whom they belonged, or by whom they were commissioned a rightful property in the soil from the Atlantic to the Pacific; or rightful dominion over the numerous people who occupied it? Or has nature, or the great Creator of all things, conferred these rights over hunters and fishermen, on agriculturists and manufacturers?

To avoid bloody conflicts, which might terminate disastrously to all, it was necessary for the nations of Europe to establish some principle which all would acknowledge and which should decide their respective rights as between themselves. This principle, suggested by the actual state of things, was 'that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects or by whose authority it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.'

This principle, acknowledged by all Europeans, because it was the interest of all to acknowledge it, gave to the nation making the discovery, as its inevitable consequence, the sole right of acquiring the soil and of making settlements upon it.[14]

---

[14] *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) 31 U.S. 350 at 369.

The Europeans' assumption of power over the Indians was founded on a supposed moral and economic superiority of European culture and civilization over that of the native people. But it was, nevertheless, acknowledged that the native people retained certain rights. Chief Justice Marshall said:

> (The native people) were admitted to be the rightful occupants of the soil, with a legal as well as just claim to retain possession of it, and to use it according to their own discretion; but their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations, were necessarily diminished and their power to dispose of the soil at their own will, to whomsoever they pleased, was denied by the original fundamental principle that discovery gave exclusive title to those who made it.[15]

It is remarkable how difficult it was—and still is—to persuade lawyers and judges of the notion that the Indians enjoy rights based on the fact they occupied vast areas of, if not the whole of, our country before the coming of the white man. Our profession has too often demonstrated an incapacity to understand the fact that the native peoples had well-defined and sophisticated concepts of legal relations and legal rights. Native ideas of landownership, though quite different from those of the common law, have in the past been rejected because judges and lawyers simply could not appreciate the fact that people without a written language may, nevertheless, have well-developed legal concepts.

It is essential to remember that the native peoples of North America had their own culture and their own way of life before the coming of the white Europeans. As Chief Justice Marshall said in *Worcester v. State of Georgia*, they had "institutions of their own and governed themselves by their own law." The assertion by the European powers of sovereignty over the rights of native inhabitants of this continent depended upon the principle of discovery (even though we may well ask ourselves today how one race of people living in one part of the globe could pretend to "discover" lands in another part of the globe already occupied by another race).

The rights of the native people preceded the coming of the white man, and were recognized by the law of all the European nations that colonized North America. The courts of the English-speaking countries have acknowledged the legal reality of native title to the lands they occupied upon discovery. The judgment of Chief Justice Marshall in *Johnson v. McIntosh* is proof enough of this.

The concept of aboriginal rights has a firm basis in international law, and we subscribe to it in Canada. During the last century, the Supreme Court of Canada in *St. Catherine's Milling & Lumber Co. v. The Queen*,[16] affirmed the proposition that the original peoples of our country had a legal right to the use and occupation of their ancestral lands. The courts have had to consider whether, in given cases the native title has been taken away by competent authority, and sometimes the courts have decided it has been. But original use and occupation of the land had always been the legal foundation for the assertion of native claims in Canada today.

The Privy Council, sitting as the highest court of appeal for many countries of the British Empire, has had to adjudicate upon aboriginal title in many parts of the world—that is, the title which peoples all over the world claim by virtue of original occupation. In 1919, the Privy Council, dealing with a claim by the Mattabeles of Southern Rhodesia, had ruled that the Mattabeles could not prove they were the decendants of the original inhabitants of the territory in question (*Amodu Tijani v. The Secretary, Southern Nigeria*[17]). Neither were they able to show that they had any clear-cut legal conception of title to land. So their claim was dismissed. But the Privy Council did say this:

> The estimation of the rights of aboriginal tribes is always inherently difficult. Some tribes are so low in the scale of social organization that their usages and conceptions of rights and duties are not to be reconciled with the institutions or the legal ideas of civilized society. Such a gulf cannot be bridged. It would be idle to impute to such people some shadow of the rights known to our law and then to transmute it into the substance of transferable rights of property as we know them. In the present case it would make each and every person by a fictional inheritance a landed proprietor richer than all his tribe. *On the other hand, there are indigenous peoples whose legal conceptions, though differently developed, are hardly less precise than our own. When once they have been studied and understood they are no less enforceable than rights arising under English law.*[18] (author's emphasis)

It is clear that if the Mattabeles had been able to prove descent and had been able to establish their aboriginal title, that title would have been "no less enforceable than rights arising under English law." But how do you present to a court evidence relating to the legal conceptions of a society without a written language? How do you satisfy our courts of the authenticity of evidence about the legal system of a society that has an oral tradition? The evidence of native people themselves is, of course, indispensable in this regard. So, too, is anthropological evidence.

---

[15] *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823) 21 U.S. 543

[16] Ontario High Court, Chancery Division (1885) 10 O.R. 196; Ontario Court of Appeal (1886) 13 O.A.R. 148; Supreme Court of Canada, (1886) 13 S.C.R. 577; (1888) 14 A.C. 46.

[17] (1921) 2 A.C. 399.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 409-410.

While the White and Bob case was before the courts, the main argument had centred on the question whether the instrument signed in 1854 was a treaty within the meaning of the *Indian Act*. But two of the judges had dealt with the alternative argument, i.e., that if the instrument was not a treaty, then White and Bob were entitled, as a matter of aboriginal right (one of the incidents of their Indian title), to hunt over their tribal territory. Judge Swencisky in the County Court and Mr. Justice Norris in the Court of Appeal had tackled the question. Each had held that the instrument signed in 1854 was a treaty, and had then dealt with the argument in the alternative, and had found in favour of the Indians on that ground too. Both judgments were remarkable. They said quite plainly that Indian title in British Columbia had not been extinguished. When *White and Bob* went to the Supreme Court of Canada that Court had simply upheld the treaty as binding on the Crown, but had not expressed any view regarding the alternative argument.

It should not be thought that the Indian land question was discussed only in the courts. Of course the Indian land question had been a burning issue in British Columbia among many native people for many years. It was, in fact, the focal point of attempts by Indian organizations to come together in the late 1960s.

But when these attempts at unification failed the Nishga tribe of the Naas Valley decided to take their land claim to court. This would be a case where the issue that had first been raised in the *White and Bob* case as an alternative argument would have to be squarely faced. The Nishgas had never ceded their land. The alternative argument in the *White and Bob* case would be the sole issue before the Court. An action for a declaration that the aboriginal title of the Nishga people had never been extinguished was brought in the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

The Nishga tribe live in four villages on the Naas River: Kincolith, Greenville, Canyon City and Aiyansh. Frank Calder, Chairman of the Nishga Tribal Council, told the Court:

> . . . from time immemorial the Nishgas have used the Naas River and all its tributaries within the boundaries so submitted, the lands in Observatory Inlet, the lands in Portland Canal, and part of Portland Inlet. We still hunt within those lands and fish in the waters, streams and rivers, we still do, as in time past, have our campsites in these areas and we go there periodically, seasonally, according to the game and the fishing season, and we still maintain these sites and as far as we know, they have been there as far back as we can remember.
>
> We still roam these territories, we still pitch our homes there whenever it is required according to our livelihood and we use the land as in times past, we bury our dead within the territory so defined and we still exercise the privilege of free men within the territory so defined.
>
> The Nishgas have never ceded or extinguished their aboriginal title within this territory.

It was conceded by the Attorney-General of British Columbia that the four bands constituting the Nishga Tribal Council and members of the Band Councils of each of the bands were the descendants of Indians who had inhabited the Naas Valley since time immemorial. The Attorney-General also admitted that the ancestors of the persons who are members of the bands living in the Naas River today had obtained a living since time immemorial from the lands and waters of the Naas Valley.

But the Attorney-General argued that there never was aboriginal title to be extinguished, and alternatively, that if any such title had ever existed, it was extinguished between 1858 (when the mainland Colony of British Columbia was established) and Confederation in 1871. The Attorney-General admitted that once British Columbia entered Confederation only the federal government could extinguish the Indian title, and that no action had been taken by the federal government since Confederation to extinguish the title.

Calder and the other members of the Tribal Council from each village gave evidence. Calder's evidence is typical. He testified as follows:

> Q: Are you on the band list?
>
> A: I am.
>
> Q: Would you tell his lordship where you were born?
>
> A: I was born in Naas Bay, near the mouth of the Naas River.
>
> Q: Where were you raised?
>
> A: I was raised at Naas Bay and mostly at Greenville.
>
> Q: Were your parents members of the Greenville Indian Band?
>
> A: Yes they are.
>
> Q: Going back beyond your own parents, are you able to say whether your forefathers lived on the Naas River?
>
> A: Yes, they did.
>
> Q: Now, Mr. Calder, are you a member of the Nishga Tribe?
>
> A: Yes, I am.
>
> Q: What Indians compose the Nishga Tribe?
>
> A: The Nishga Indians that live in the four inlets of the Naas River.
>
> Q: What are the names of the four Indians?
>
> A: Kincolith.
>
> Q: Kincolith?
>
> A: That's correct, Greenville, Canyon City and Aiyansh.

Q: Can you tell his lordship, Mr. Calder, whether all of the Indians who live in the four communities on the Naas River are members of the Nishga Tribe?

A: Yes, they are members of the Nishga Tribe.

Q: Do you include not only the men and women but the children as well?

A: Yes.

Q What language do the members of the Nishga Tribe speak?

A They speak Nishga, known as Nishga today.

Q: Is that language related to any other languages that are spoken on the North Pacific Coast?

A: It is not the exact—our neighbouring two tribes, we more or less understand each other, but Nishga itself is in the Naas River, and there is no other neighbouring tribe that has that language.

Q: What are the names of the two neighbouring tribes who have a limited understanding of your language?

A: Gitskan and Tsimshian.

Q: Do you regard yourself as a member of the Nishga Tribe?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Do you know if the Indian people who are members of the four Indian bands on the Naas River regard themselves as members of the Nishga Tribe?

A: Yes, they do.

Q: Apart from their language, do they share anything else in common?

A: Besides the language they share our whole way of life.

Q: Now, Mr. Calder, I am showing you exhibit 2, which is a map Mr. Brown and I have agreed upon Does the territory outlined in the map constitute the ancient territory of the Nishga people?

A: Yes, it does.

Q: Have the Nishga people ever signed any document or treaty surrendering their aboriginal title to the territory outlined in the map, exhibit 2?

A: The Nishgas have not signed any treaty or any document that would indicate extinguishment of the title.

Willard Ireland once again was on the stand. He produced the private papers of Governor Douglas, as well as dispatches between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Governor Douglas and many other historic documents, including the Nishga petition to the Privy Council in 1913. Evidence was given of two extracts from testimony given at hearings of two Royal Commissions, the first being in 1888 when David Mackay, speaking for the Nishgas, said, in part:

> David Mackey—what we don't like about the Government is their saying this: "We will give you this much land". How can they give it when it is our own? We cannot understand it. They have never bought it from us or our forefathers. They have never fought and conquered our people and taken the land in that way, and yet they say now that they will give us so much land—our own land. These chiefs do not talk foolishly, they know the land is their own; our forefathers for generations and generations past had their land here all around us; chiefs have had their own hunting grounds, their salmon streams, and places where they got their berries; it has always been so. It is not only during the last four or five years that we have seen the land; we have always seen and owned it; it is no new thing, it has been ours for generations. If we had only seen it for twenty years and claimed it as our own, it would have been foolish, but it has been ours for thousands of years. If any strange person came here and saw the land for twenty years and claimed it, he would be foolish. We have always got our living from the land; we are not like white people who live in towns and have their stores and other business, getting their living in that way, but we have always depended on the land for our food and clothes; we get our salmon, berries, and furs from the land.

At the second Royal Commission hearing in 1915 (the McKenna-McBride Commission), Gideon Minesque for the Nishgas said:

> We haven't got any ill feelings in our hearts but we are just waiting for this thing to be settled and we have been waiting for the last five years—we have been living here from time immemorial—it has been handed down in legends from the old people and that is what hurts us very much because the white people have come along and taken this land away from us. I myself am an old man and as long as I have lived, my people have been telling me stories about the flood and they did not tell me that I was only to live here on this land for a short time. We have heard that some white men, it must have been in Ottawa; this white man said that they must be dreaming when they say they own the land upon which they live. It is not a dream—we are certain that this land belongs to us. Right up to this day the government never made any treaty, not even to our grandfathers or our great-grandfathers.

Wilson Duff's evidence linked the past to the present. He had prepared a map for the Court showing the extent of the tribal territory of the Nishga. He testified as follows:

Q: Did you, Professor Duff, in fact prepare for counsel the map that has been marked Exhibit 2 in this case?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Are you familiar with the anthropological history of the Indian people who inhabited the area delineated in the map and the surrounding areas?

A: Yes, I am.

Q: Who has, since time immemorial, inhabited the area delineated on the map?

A: The Nishga Indians.

Q: Can you tell the Court what position the Indians in the areas adjacent to that delineated on the map took regarding the occupancy of the Nishga Tribe of that area?

A: All of the surrounding tribes knew the Nishga as the homogeneous group of Indians occupying the area delineated on the map. They knew of them collectively under the term Nishga. They knew that they spoke their own dialect, that they occupied and were owners of that territory and they respected these tribal boundaries of the territory.

The McKenna-McBride report had delineated reserves. These appeared in Volume 3 of the McKenna-McBride report:

Q: By the tribal boundaries do you mean the boundaries delineated on the map?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, are you able to tell the Court whether the Nishga Tribe made use of the land and the waters delineated on the map beyond the limits of the reserve that appear on this map in the MacKenna-McBride report?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there any significance to the location of the reserves on the Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet and the Nass River?

A: Yes, I think that I can say that in many cases these small reserves were located, for example, on the Portland Canal at the mouth of the tributary stream, at the mouth of a valley. The reserve is a small piece of land at the mouth of the stream which, to a degree, protects the Indian fishing rights to the stream.

Q: Now, prior to the establishment of these reserves what use would the Indian people have made of the areas which flow into the mouths of the streams and rivers?

A: The general pattern in these cases would be that the ownership of the mouth of the stream and the seasonal villages, or habitations that were built there, signify the ownership and use of the entire valley. It would be used as a fishing site itself and a fishing site on the river, but in addition to that the people who made use of this area would have the right to go up the valley for berry picking up on the slopes, for hunting and trapping in the valley and up to forest slopes, usually for the hunting of mountain goats. In other words they made use, more or less intensive use of the entire valley rather than just the point at the mouth of the stream.

Q: Now in your book [*Indian History of British Columbia*, Volume I] which has been marked as an exhibit you say on page 8:

"At the time of contact the Indians of this area were among the world's most distinctive peoples. Fully one-third of the native population of Canada lived here. They were concentrated most heavily along the coastline and the main western rivers, and in these areas they developed their cultures to higher peaks, in many respects, than in any other part of the continent north of Mexico. Here, too, was the greatest linguistic diversity in the country, with two dozen languages spoken, belonging to seven of the eleven language families represented in Canada. The coastal tribes were, in some ways, different from all other American Indians. Their languages, true enough, were members of American families, and physically they were American Indians, though with decided traits of similarity to the peoples of Northeastern Asia. Their cultures, however, had a pronounced Asiatic tinge, evidence of basic kinship and long continued contact with the peoples around the North Pacific rim. Most of all, their cultures were distinguished by a local richness and originality, the product of vigorous and inventive people in a rich environment."

Would that paragraph apply to the people who inhabited the area delinated on the map, Exhibit 2?

A: Yes.

Q: The next paragraph reads:

"It is not correct to say that the Indians did not own the land but only roamed over the face of it and used it. The patterns of ownership and utilization which they imposed upon the lands and waters were different from those recognized by our system of law, but were nonetheless clearly defined and mutually respected. Even if they didn't subdivide and cultivate the land, they did recognize ownership of plots used for village sites, fishing places, berry and root patches, and similar purposes. Even if they didn't subject the forest to wholesale logging, they did establish ownership of tracts used for hunting, trapping and food gathering. Even if they didn't sink mine shafts into the mountains, they did own peaks and valleys for mountain goat hunting and as sources of raw materials. Except for barren and inaccessible areas which are not utilized even today, every part of the province was formerly within the owned and recognized territory of one or other of the Indian Tribes."

Does that paragraph apply to the people who inhabited the area delineated on the map, Exhibit 2?

A: Yes, it does.

Q: Does it apply to the Nishga Tribe?

A: Yes, it does.

Q: Now, you have said that the paragraph that I have just read to you applies to the Nishga Tribe. Can you tell his lordship the extent of the use to which the Nishgas have put the lands and waters in the area delineated on Exhibit 2 and how intensive that use was?

A: This could be quite a long statement.

Q: Well, I think we can live with it.

A: And much of it has already been said. However, the territories in general were recognized by the people themselves and by other tribes as the territory of the Nishga Tribe. Certain of these territories were used in common for certain purposes, for example, obtaining of logs and timber for houses, and canoes, totem poles, and the other parts of the culture that were made of wood, like the dishes and the boxes and masks, and a great variety of other things, and the obtainment of bark, which was made into forms of cloth and mats and ceremonial gear. These would tend to be used in common.

Other areas weren't tribal territories, would be allotted or owned by family groups of the tribe and these would be used, different parts, with different degrees of intensity. For example, the beaches where the shell fish were gathered would be intensively used. The salmon streams would be most intensively used, sometimes at different times of the year, because different kinds of salmon can run at different times of the year.

The lower parts of the valley where hunting and trapping were done would be intensively used, not just for food and the hides and skins and bone and horn material that was used by the Indian culture, but for furs of different kinds of large and small animals which were either used by the Indians or traded by them.

These people were great traders and they exploited their territories to a great degree for materials to trade to other Indians and later to the white man.

The farther slopes up the valleys, many of them would be good mountain goat hunting areas. This was an important animal for hunting. Other slopes would be good places for trapping of marmots, the marmot being equally important, and there are a great number of lesser resources, things like minerals of certain kinds for tools and lichen and mosses of certain kinds that were made into dyes. It becomes a very long list.

Q: Go ahead.

A: Now, in addition to this, the waterways were used for the hunting of sea animals as well as fishing of different kinds. They were used also as highways, routes of travel for trade amongst themselves and for their annual migration from winter to summer villages, and a great variety of minor resources from water, like shell fish of different kinds, fish eggs, herring eggs —there is a great list of such minor resources in addition.

Q: To what extent would the use and exploitation of the resources of the Nishga territory have extended in terms of that territory? Would it have extended only through a limited part of the territory or through the whole territory?

A: To a greater or lesser degree of intensity it would extend through a whole territory except for the most barren and inaccessible parts, which were not used or wanted by anyone. But the ownership of an entire drainage basin marked out by the mountain peaks would be recognized as resting within one or other groups of Nishga Indians and these boundaries, this ownership would be respected by others.

Q: Now, can you make any comparison between the area that is represented by the Indian Reserves in the map, in the third volume of the McKenna-McBride Report; can you make any comparison between that area represented by those reserves and the area of the whole Nishga territory that was used and exploited by the Nishgas before their confinement to reserves?

A: Well, I think the comparison is simply here, and these are several tiny plots of land, whereas on the map (Exhibit 2) the entire tract was used for some purpose or other with some greater or lesser degree of intensity.

When examining historical materials, lawyers and judges are used to dealing with written material. We are not used to dealing with sources that are not written down. Duff's sources did of course include historical records, and published works by anthropologists, but they also included his own field notes and the field notes of others, a variety of unpublished material of various kinds, and stories and recollections of many Indian people. He explained the nature of his sources:

A: All right. I am, of course, familiar with the great bulk of the published material on the Indians of this area, some of which will be entered into evidence. I have myself discussed these matters with many Indians, both Nishga and their neighbours, but my main source of information is the great, abundant body of unpublished anthropological and historical material which was assembled in the National Museum of Canada by the anthropologist Marius Barbeau, who worked in this area between 1914 and the late '40's, and continued to assemble it until just a couple of years ago. He died this past year. Also, a Tsimshian gentleman who actually thought of himself as a Nishga chief, William Beynon who lived the greater part of his life at Port Simpson, who was an interpreter and assistant of Barbeau and other anthropologists and who, himself, until his death in 1967, recorded hundreds and hundreds of pages of anthropological information and family traditions and narratives having to do with the Nishga and the Gitksan people. I have had access to this great body of unpublished material. I spent a year at the National Museum working with it ten years ago and his has provided me with the detailed information upon which I can make these statements. Unfortunately I haven't worked it up into a publishable form as yet and it is such a vast body of material that I don't have it all at the tip of my tongue.

Mr. D. McK. Brown, Q.C., representing the Attorney-General, cross-examined Duff:

Q: Well, now I was asking you as to what documentary or other evidence there was that justifies you in using the word "ownership". I suggest that that was a concept that was foreign to the Indians of the Nass Agency?

A: I am an anthropologist, sir, and the kind of evidence with which I work is largely not documentary evidence. It is verbal evidence given by people who didn't produce documents and it is turned into documentary form in anthropological and historical reports and in the reports of various Commissions.

Q: All right. Well, that is what I want now.

A: Yes, okay.

Q: I want you to state, so I can go and look them up, the documents you rely upon to support your statement, your use of the word "ownership", as "belonging" in the Indian concept.

A: Anthropological reports which I understand Mr. Berger is going to enter into the record, one of them by Philip Drucker, is a general book on the Indians of the Northwest Coast and it would use the term. Another is a book by Viola Garfield as to the Tsimshian Indians in general and in this sense it includes the Nishga which would use a concept of ownership.

Q: Now, are you suggesting that this is anything other than a tribal concept?

A: It includes the tribal concept and it is more besides, yes.

Q: Well, perhaps if my learned friend would give me the book you can indicate just what you mean. What was the book you referred to, Drucker?

A: Drucker or Docker.

Q: Would you indicate what you have in mind?

A: May I read it? Do you want me to read a section?

Q: Yes. Just direct our attention, will you, to the particular points?

A: This is Viola Garfield's book, "The Tsimshian, Their Arts and Music." On page 14—

THE COURT: Now, tell me something about the author first.

A: Yes. The authoress is an anthropologist who studied at the University of Washington in Seattle and who is still a professor of Anthropology there and who did her field work and much of her writing on the Tsimshian Indians. These would be primarily the Tsimshian, in the narrower sense of people who live at Port Simpson, now Metlakatla, but the concepts would apply to the Nishga as well.

On page 14 she writes:

> "It was characteristic of the Tsimshian, as of other Northwest Coast Tribes, that exclusive rights to exploit the resource districts were claimed by kin. Lineages of the Tsimshian were the owners of rights to hunt, fish, pick berries or gather raw materials from geographically defined territory. Lineage properties were listed at an installation potlatch of a new head, hence were in his name. Lineage heads could and did designate certain areas as actually his and pass them on as private property to successors. This is the concept of ownership that—"

Q: Well, the basis of any statement about ownership would lie in the fact that the Nishgas had exclusive possession of the area, it was unchallenged, isn't that true?

A: For the area marked on the map?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes.

Q: So that anyone has to be careful about what word you apply because of the legal implications and to speak of ownership simply because someone has an unchallenged possession is to confuse two things, would you not agree?

A: The point I was trying to make in the second paragraph [of Duff's own book] that Mr. Berger read out was that although their concepts of ownership were not the same as our legal concept of ownership, they nevertheless existed and were recognized and that is the point I was trying to make.

Q: Well, anyway, you are unable to find any documentary evidence in support other than conclusions drawn by anthropologists?

A: And also verbatim statements by Indians at the various Commissions, and I think Mr. Berger is going to enter some of this.

MR. BERGER: They have been entered.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

Q: Well, in other words the Indians would speak of the fact that when they attended before a Commission, that they owned the land?

A: Yes.

Q: They would speak in those terms as "We" as a group.

A: Yes.

Q: "Own the land".

A: I think they would go beyond that and say, "And the chief owned that certain territory up Portland Inlet where we used to get this and that," and the whole list of things that I referred to before.

Q: Would one family defend its right like that against other famlies?

A: It could, yes.

Q: Well, is there evidence of that?

A: There are narratives to that effect, yes.

Q: In the Nishga Valley, in the territory you have marked off there?

A: Yes.

Q: Where? Can you point to that?

A: They are in the unpublished material that I have been referring to.

Duff also went into the details of the Nishga system of succession to property based on a matrilineal line, showing that the Nishgas had a well-developed and sophisticated concept of property. Regarding the general state of development and sophistication of the culture of the Nishgas, he testified, quoting from his book as follows:

Q: Now, you say, going back to page 16: [of Duff's book]
"On the Northern Coast, where kinship ties were most rigidly defined, matrilineal households or lineages were the basic units that united in each locality to form tribal groups, which usually assembled for part of the year in a common village."
Now, was that a characteristic in the Nishga groups, and if so, where did they assemble in a common village?

A: There was no single common village in which all of the Nishga groups assembled at any one time.

Q: No, I didn't understand that from the councillors. Now, you say:
"Among the Tsimshian these tribes hardened into firmly knit political units (this was somewhat less the case among the Gitksan, Niska—"
Now, those two peoples we are talking about, the people within the area you have delineated, are they not?

A: The Gitksan are just outside of the area and the Nishga are inside the area.

Q: Yes. So Niska means Nishga there?

A: That is correct, yes.

Q: And is that a correct statement, that this was somewhat less the case among the Nishga?

A: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Brown discussed Drucker's work with Duff and reverting to the question of ownership, he said, quoting with approval from Drucker, a well-known American anthropologist.

Q: Yes, please.

A: This is the chapter on social and political organization of the peoples of the North Pacific Coast. The section that is relevant here concerns the localized groups of kin. The localized groups of kin define who lived together, worked together and who jointly considered themselves exclusive owners of the tracts from which food and other prime materials were obtained.

Q: Jointly considered themselves, is that the word?

A: Jointly considered themselves, yes.
The whole group owned not only lands and their produce but all other forms of wealth, material treasures and intangible rights usually referred to as privileges, names for persons,

houses, canoes, houseboats and even for dogs and slaves. I emphasize the phrases that I wanted to emphasize there.

Q: So that there was a form, again, of a communal approach?

A: In that sense.

Q: Yes.

A: It belonged to the group, yes.

Q: Thank you.

A: And on page 49, the last eight or so lines, this is dealing with wealth in these cultures and I quote:

"Distinctive of North Pacific Coast culture is the inclusion of natural resources and items of wealth; the foodstuffs, the materials for dress, shelter and transport and the places from which these things were obtained. Each group regarded the areas utilized as the exclusive property of the group. Group members used habitation sites, fishing grounds, clam beaches, hunting and burying grounds, that is in the sense of getting buried, forest areas where timber and bark were obtained through right. Outsiders entered by invitation or in trespass.

"Bounds were defined by natural landmarks with a precision remarkable for people with no surveying equipment."

MR. BROWN:

Q: Thank you. Now, what is he discussing there? Is he discussing a particular group?

A: He is discussing the Northwest Coast groups in general, of which the Nishga are one.

Mr. Justice J. G. Gould was the trial judge. His colloquy with Duff revealed how useful anthropological evidence could be to the court. The trial Judge's questions and Duff's answers were as follows:

THE COURT:

Q: I want to discuss with you the short descriptive concept of your modern ownership of land in British Columbia, and I am going to suggest to you three characteristics (1) specific delineation of the land, we understand is the lot.

A: Yes.

Q: Specifically delinated down to the lot, and the concept of the survey; (2) exclusive possession against the whole world, including your own family. Your own family, you know that, you want to keep them off or kick them off and one can do so; (3) to keep the fruits of the barter or to leave it or to have your heirs inherit it, which is the concept of wills. Now, those three characteristics—are you with me?

A: Yes.

Q: Specific delineation, exclusive possession, the right of alienation, have you found in your anthropological studies any evidence of that concept being in the consciousness of the Nishgas and having them executing such a concept?

A: My lord, there are three concepts.

Q: Yes, or a combination of them.

A: Could we deal with them one at a time?

Q: Yes, you can do it any way you like. You deal with it.

A: Specific delineation, I think, was phrased by Dr.—

Q: Touched upon by landmarks.

A: Physical landmarks, physical characteristics. The exclusive occupation did not reside in an individual. It rested in a group of people who were a sub-group of the tribe.

Q: The third one was alienation.

A: The owners in this sense had certain rights of alienation. They could give up the tract of land, lose it in warfare, but in practice it would not go to anybody outside of the tribe, that is, a tract of Nishga land might change hands but it wouldn't go to other than a Nishga family.

Q: So am I correct in assuming that there are similarities in the Nishga civilization in the first two characteristics, but not the third? All that alienation means, of course, is that you can sell it to anybody you like?

A: Yes.

Q: Generally speaking, I mean, that is what it does. Two of the three the Nishga Tribe—I don't want to put words in your mouth, now, I want you to tell me.

A: Delineation but not by modern surveying methods.

Q: Of course, I understand, yes.

A: Exclusive ownership resting not in an individual.

Mr. Justice Gould dismissed the Nishgas' case. He did not purport to decide whether Indian title existed in British Columbia at the time white settlement began. He held that if it has existed, it had been extinguished by pre-Confederation legislation passed by the old Colony of British Columbia. Nevertheless, he described Duff and Ireland as "scholars of renown." He expected the case to be appealed, and he said:

> I find that all witnesses gave their respective testimony as to facts, opinions, and historical and other documents, with total integrity. Thus there is no issue of credibility as to the witnesses in this case, and an appellate Court, with transcript and exhibits in hand, would be under no comparable disadvantage in evaluating the evidence from not having heard the witnesses *in personam*.

We appealed to the British Columbia Court of Appeal. There we suffered a great setback. The Court of Appeal held that the Nishgas had never had aboriginal title, and that it had in any event been extinguished by the old Colony of British Columbia. So we appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

I urged M. Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs, to intervene before the Supreme Court of Canada on behalf of the Indians. Though sympathetic himself, he refused because he was bound by the Government's policy. The Government of Canada had earlier in a statement[19] issued in 1969, said that:

---

[19] Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969.

> . . . aboriginal claims to land . . . are so general and undefined that it is not realistic to think of them as specific claims capable of remedy except through a policy and program that will end injustice to Indians as members of the Canadian community.

Prime Minister Trudeau, speaking in Vancouver on August 8, 1969, expressed the Government's position on aboriginal claims:

> Our answer is no. We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical 'might have beens'.

The Nishgas lost again in the Supreme Court of Canada. But when the reasoning of the seven judges who heard the case was examined, it became apparent that though technically they had lost, in fact they had succeeded.

All the judges in the Supreme Court of Canada had relied heavily on the evidence given by Wilson Duff at the trial. Mr. Justice Wilfred Judson, speaking for Mr. Justice Martland and Mr. Justice Ritchie, as well as for himself, found that the Nishgas, before the coming of the white man, had aboriginal title, a title that was recognized under English law. But, he went on to say, it had been extinguished by pre-Confederation enactments of the old Colony of British Columbia.

Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, who spoke for Mr. Justice Spence and Mr. Justice Laskin (now Chief Justice), held that the Nishgas had aboriginal title before the coming of the white man, that it had never been lawfully extinguished, and that it could be asserted even today.

Mr. Justice Louis-Philippe Pigeon, the seventh judge, expressed no opinion on the main issue. He held against the Nishgas on the ground that they had proceeded by issuing a writ against the Province of British Columbia (the Attorney-General of British Columbia was named as defendant), and that they should have proceeded by way of petition of right (a procedure unavailable to them, since in those days it was necessary to have the consent of the Province to issue a petition of right against the Crown in right of the Province).

So all six judges who had addressed the question had supported the view that the Nishgas' title had been recognized by English law in force in British Columbia at the time of the coming of the white man. This was the first time that Canada's highest court had unequivocally affirmed the concept of Indian title. Mr. Justice Judson, in describing the nature of Indian title, relied upon the passage from Duff's *The Indian History of British Columbia*, cited at p. 28, *infra*. He concluded at pp. 11-12:

> Although I think that it is clear that Indian title in British Columbia cannot owe its origin to the Proclamation of 1763, the fact is that when the settlers came, the Indians were there, organized in societies and occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries. This is what Indian title means and it does not help one in the solution of this problem to call it a 'personal or usufructuary right'. What they are asserting in this action is that they had a right to continue to live on their lands as their forefathers had lived and that this right has never been lawfully extinguished. There can be no question that this right was 'dependent on the goodwill of the Sovereign'.

Mr. Justice Hall relied heavily on Duff's evidence given at the trial. He said:

> The assessment and interpretation of the historical documents and enactments tendered in evidence must be approached in the light of present-day research and knowledge disregarding ancient concepts formulated when understanding of the customs and culture of our original people was rudimentary and incomplete and when they were thought to be wholly without cohesion, laws or culture, in effect a subhuman species.

He reviewed Duff's evidence and concluded:

> What emerges from the . . . evidence is the following: the Nishgas in fact are and were from time immemorial a distinctive cultural entity with concepts of ownership indigenous to their culture and capable of articulation under the common law having, in the words of Dr. Duff, 'developed their cultures to higher peaks in many respects than in any other part of the continent north of Mexico'.

Six judges of the Supreme Court of Canada had affirmed the idea of Indian title based on aboriginal use and occupation.Thus, Indian title cannot be said to originate in executive order, legislative enactment, or treaty, though of course it may be extinguished by competent legislative authority. It was on the latter point that Mr. Justice Judson and Mr. Justice Hall were in disagreement: Mr. Justice Judson held that the title of the Nishgas had been extinguished before Confederation, and Mr. Justice Hall held that the title was still good today.

The Government of Canada, following the judgment in the *Nishga* case, announced that it intended to settle native land claims in all parts of Canada where no treaties had been made. By virtue of this commitment, negotiations to settle native claims are proceeding all over Canada. The judgment of Mr. Justice Hall has become the basis for the assertion of native land claims throughout Canada today. Thus we find ourselves engaged in the settlement of comprehensive claims based on aboriginal rights. These are claims that the Government of Canada now welcomes as the principal means for achieving the social and economic goals of native people in Canada.

Thus *White & Bob* and the *Nishga* case opened up the whole question of native land claims in Canada. All over Canada native people are advancing their claims today. It is part of the unfinished business of our country and the consequences will take years to unravel.

These cases demonstrated the relevance of anthropological and historical knowledge to the proving of native land claims. It is now not at all unusual for anthropologists to give evidence in native rights cases.

Anthropological evidence, "once studied and understood," gave rise in Canada to a new and further recognition of aboriginal rights. I think such evidence will be equally useful in working out the ways in which native claims can be settled. The Constitution of Canada provides for special status for the native people. This is the legacy of our history, and long-established policy of the Government of Canada. The Government has made a commitment to settle claims by native people. Such a settlement will not be easy to reach. We are, however, fortunate in that our constitution offers an opportunity to deal with such claims.

It is true that a land claims settlement is no longer seen as entailing merely the extinguishment of Indian title in exchange for cash and land. Land claims have become the means for articulating a whole range of concerns native people have relating to education, renewable resources, local government, law and order, delivery of health services and social services. It is for this reason that the federal government has seen the necessity for settlement of comprehensive claims.

Anthropological evidence will be important, now and in the future, in establishing the full extent of such claims. Wilson Duff's contribution was unique in Canada.

The Changing Status of Haida Women: An Ethnohistorical and Life History Approach

Margaret B. Blackman
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

I owe more to Florence Edenshaw Davidson that I can express in a brief note. I thank her for sharing the story of her life, for opening new realms of knowledge, and most of all for her warmth and friendship. Marion Duff kindly allowed me to study Wilson Duff's Haida notes and manuscripts, and Marjorie Mitchell brought the Pine manuscript to my attention. Finally, I thank Edwin S. Hall, Jr., for reading and commenting upon this paper and Tina Howe for typing it. Research for this project was funded by an Urgent Ethnology contract from the National Museum of Man.

An interest in native life histories as ethnographic documents can be traced back to Franz Boas whose intensive enduring relationship with a single informant-collaborator (George Hunt) and whose focus upon the collection of native texts led him to regard descriptions cast in the imagery of the people themselves as the authentic rendering of culture (Goldman, 1975:vii). A number of researchers who followed Boas to the coast, temporally and intellectually, similarly valued the utility of the life-history document. Sapir (1921) published a composite "life history" account of a Nootka Man; Jenness (1955) relied upon the personal reminiscences of "Old Pierre" to compile his treatise on Katzie supernatural beliefs, and Marius Barbeau's (1957) discussion of Haida argillite carvings included data on the artistic careers of the major Haida slate carvers. Two Northwest Coast life-history documents span successive generations of recent Southern Kwakiutl culture history and are particularly valuable for their documentation of continuity and change in that culture. In 1940, the Kwakiutl Charlie Nowel dictated his life story to Clellan Ford (1941), and, following him, in the 1960s, James Sewid related his personal history with the editorial assistance of anthropologist James Spradley (1969).

While he never published a life-history document, Wilson Duff shared the interest of other Northwest Coast researchers in life-history materials. In this regard it is noteworthy that Duff's outline for his article on Haida culture in the Handbook of North American Indians included under the heading, "culture history," a section entitled "the roles of great men," followed by a list of 11 names.[1] The focus of Duff's life-history research was Charles Edenshaw, the famed Haida artist whom Duff came to know through ethnographic collections of his work, a host of scattered ethnohistorical sources, and from the personal reminiscences of Florence Edenshaw Davidson, the artist's daughter. Although Duff's notes and gleanings on Charles Edenshaw and his predecessor, Albert Edward Edenshaw, never achieved the final form that Duff had intended for them, they served as an inspiration for the work of his students (e.g., Thomas, 1967) and found expression in a popular children's ethnohistory of the Haida (Harris, 1966).

An impressive paper, written for Duff by an undergraduate student on "The Power and Authority of Women in Haida Society" (Pine, n.d.), perhaps similarly inspired, was in part a response to the numerous documents of the lives of native Northwest Coast males. The introduction to Pine's paper remarks upon a familiar pattern and shortcoming in ethnographic accounts: male ethnographers focus upon the roles and activities of native males while similar data on females are incidental and incomplete, limited to discussions of the crises of a normal life cycle: birth, puberty, marriage and death. This bias, so frequently lamented in the current anthropological literature on women, (cf. Quinn, 1977:184) is typical of the Northwest Coast ethnological material. While the anthropological literature on native North American includes a few examples of female biographical accounts (e.g., Lurie, 1961; Marriott, 1948; Washburne, 1940), and recently a few native women have written their own autobiographies (e.g., Campbell, 1973; Willis, 1972), Northwest Coast ethnology, which is relatively rich in accounts of male lives, is lacking in similar materials on females.

---

[1] The individuals listed were "Cunneah, Cow, Altatsie, Koyah, the Skidegates, the Edenshaws, Amos Russ, Tom Price, Alfred Adams, Peter Kelly, Bill Reid."

Aware of these lacunae in the literature and the pressing need for comparative life-history material on females, but perhaps more for sentimental and personal than academic reasons, I began work with Florence Davidson at her home in Masset on the recording of her life history in January of 1977. After a return trip in June of 1977, we had compiled nearly 40 hours of tapes on the life and family history of Mrs. Davidson, as a child the favourite daughter of Charles Edenshaw and now, at this writing (October 1977), in her 82nd year. The immediate goal of the project is Mrs. Davidson's biography, but the tapes recount as well data on both the traditional and changing roles of Haida women. The life-history tapes are all the more significant in this regard, for in their documentation of the individual perspective they reveal the allowable idiosyncrasies, the individual strategies, and the departures from the norms that comprise the structures and behaviours reported in traditional ethnographic accounts (Blackman, in press).

The paper which follows has a twofold intent: (1) to elucidate the traditional roles of Haida women, drawing upon earlier ethnographic data as well as upon my own field research with Florence Davidson; and, (2) to analyze the changing roles of Haida women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the significance of these changes and the agents/processes responsible for them. In regard to the traditional position of women, the analysis of the published literature by Pine is pertinent here both for its insights and its inaccuracies. This paper does not concur with Pine's interpretation of Haida society as "dynamic bilateral symmetry, of which the woman was the source," a world in which the women "controlled as much power and authority as did the man" (Pine, n.d., 94-95). The picture is rather more complex than that. Acculturation is shown to have brought rearrangements in women's roles, at times enhancing, at times denigrating, the position of women.

Much of the recent literature focusing upon the role of women has entangled itself in a fallacious search for sexual equality in preindustrial, tribal societies. The extreme of such a quest is reflected in an article on native American women (Cheda, 1973:68) in which the author draws upon the oft-cited favourable position of women in Iroquois society to conclude that Iroquois men and women held equal rights and that "... the early Indian woman enjoyed a variety of roles and freedoms unknown to her white sisters." To the contrary, Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974:2-3) conclude that while the social world is the creation of both male and female actors, "sexual assymetry is presently a universal fact of social life." This paper, in presenting a diachronic view of the position of women in Haida society, agrees in principle with Rosaldo and Lamphere, that even in a society where women traditionally enjoyed a favourable position, sexual assymetry and male dominance were marked.

Male and Female in Traditional Haida Society

Though one might best examine each area of a culture for its bearing on the position of women in that society, because of limitations of space I have chosen to focus upon the critical areas of economics, the ceremonial division of labour, cultural specialist roles, and cultural values. Investigation of these topics is preceded by an overview of the traditional female life cycle.

Life Cycle

The cultural significance of sex differences was apparent from the moment a pregnant woman contemplated the sex of her unborn child. Particularly in the years of the population decline (1862-1920), but probably aboriginally as well (cf. Murdock, 1934a:248), a married couple preferred girls to boys in order to "increase the tribe /lineage/."[2] Differential ritual treatment was accorded males and females at the moment of birth. The umbilical cord of a female child was cut with a knife belonging to its mother; if a male, the knife used was the father's (Murdock, 1934a:238-49). Personal names, as opposed to honorific names, which were bestowed in infancy, were sex linked. The mother, after consultation with the child's father and grandparents, named a male infant after its real or classificatory paternal grandfather, while a female was named after one of its "grandmothers," a second-generation woman of the infant's own or father's father's lineage.

While still infants, both males and females had their ears pierced, an event which was publicly marked by a feast. If of high rank, children of both sexes received tattoos at potlatches given by their fathers. The item of adornment that marked the Haida female, the labret, was likely acquired at or shortly after puberty (Pine, n.d.:31), though several observers mention that the initial incision was cut in the lower lip when the girl was a small child (cf. Curtis, 1916:122). La Pérouse (1798:165) observed that all Haida women, without exception, wore labrets (cf. also Dawson, 1880:108B), while (Murdock, 1934a:234) claims the lip plug was a distinguishing mark of high-status women. Regardless of whether worn by all or some, labrets "stood out as something which was essentially and exclusively female . . ." (Pine, n.d.:32). The relative size of the labret seems to have figured importantly in social relationships between women as indicated in the following observation by George Dorsey (1898:7, quoted in Pine, n.d.:32):

---

[2] Unreferenced quotes are statements made by Mrs. Davidson.

> Disputes between women were often settled by one of the disputants scornfully pointing one hand at her enemy's and laying a finger on her own labret, disclaiming in a manner at once emphatic and conclusive—"My labret is bigger than yours."

Charles Harrison (1912), a missionary and longtime resident among the Haida, is the only ethnographer to offer an explanation of relative labret size, noting that its correlate was the number of children that a women had borne. This correlation does not seem unreasonable given the fact that the Haida placed great value on large families, employing magical means to insure fertility.[3] Thus, this visible marker of female status can be seen as an expression of the cultural value placed on the female reproduction. This status is incipient from early childhood when the initial incision is made for later receipt of the lip plug.

Although females were marked from early childhood as different from males, Pine (n.d.:23-25), correctly I think, surmises that childhood was a period of relatively free association between males and females. Unfortunately, there are virtually no ethnographic data on this point. Florence Davidson's recollections from the early twentieth century, however, support Pine's (n.d.:23) statement that "until puberty there were large areas of common activity and interest between the two (sexes)." Boys and girls together took part in ball games and play activities that imitated adult life. Work activities at this early stage in life, however, were sex linked: boys gathered firewood with their fathers; girls collected bark, berries and roots with their mothers. However, the rigid and ritually maintained differences between the sexes were not activated until a girl's puberty ceremony.

The tagwanā, or first menstruation seclusion, marked for a girl a very real "change of life," for emerging from this ritual seclusion she was acknowledged to be a woman. No puberty ceremony existed for a male, but the move to his maternal uncle's household (at about age 10-11) initiated the process of making him into a man. Curtis (1916:126), in this regard, comments, "A boy who remained too long with his mother was chided by others, and whenever he made a mistake people would assure him that it was because he had lived too long at home." Under the tutelage of his mother's brother, a male child received formal instruction in ceremonial roles and assisted his uncle in economic activities. Harsh discipline and rigorous physical activity served to toughen him.

A girl received formal instruction from female relatives during her puberty seclusion. Confined to a rear corner of the house[4] for a period of 20 days (Swanton, 1909:48; Curtis, 1916:126), the girl was enjoined to observe a number of taboos[5] and was visited exclusively by female relatives—older sisters, mother, grandmother, and perhaps most importantly, father's sisters. Prescribed behaviour and instruction were designed to elicit desirable womanly qualities: endurance, modesty and a retiring disposition, moderation in eating and drinking. Pine (n.d.:27) effectively summarizes the significance of these taboos:

> The taboos which the maturing girl observed can be seen as falling into two categories: those designed to mould her own physique and character . . . and those which, if broken, would effect (*sic*) the ecology of the entire group. The concept common to both was power. The transitional phase between the asexuality of childhood and the sexuality of womanhood was a phase during which the female possessed an incredible amount of power. The power was seen to have the potential of both individual constructiveness and collective destructiveness.

Florence Davidson summed up Haida conceptions of this female power by remarking, "Once they change their life, they're [men] scared of them."

Childhood was terminated both actually and symbolically in the surrender of childhood toys to the father's sisters (Murdock, 1934a:250), and the girl was accorded the status of a woman upon her emergence from behind the partition. A girl's assumption of womanhood was given public acknowledgement at a small potlatch given by her mother to women of the opposite moiety, particularly and sometimes exclusively, to the sisters of the young woman's father. After this potlatch a young woman was considered marriageable and usually was married shortly after.

Both Murdock (1934b:359) and Swanton (1909:50) state that a girl's mother played a decisive role in determining whom she married, even, according to Murdock, arranging the marriage. Data from my own research, however, suggest that the negotiations were between the prospective groom's own and father's lineages and the prospective bride's own and father's lineages. A girl's maternal uncle together with her father seem to have played more significant roles in the arrangements than the girl's mother.

---

[3] Florence Davidson mentioned the eating of little birds that resembled sea gulls in order to have many children.

[4] Not the central, chief's portion, as Pine (n.d.:7) suggests.

[5] These taboos included no talking or laughing; no use of the regular house doorway; no looking at the sea or house fire; no eating fresh fish, seaweed, or shellfish; no contact with the hunting/fishing and gambling equipment of male household members (cf. Swanton, 1909:49-50). Florence Davidson added that the girl was not allowed to drink water during her seclusion.

Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was practiced by the Haida and residence was avunculocal after an initial period of bride service. This meant, that in many cases, a girl remained in her natal household for life. A married woman could hold property independently of her husband (Swanton, 1909:54; Murdock, 1934b:371) and a woman often received property from her parents as endowment for her marriage. At death, her property was passed on to a daughter. Though a woman may have continued to reside in her natal house following her marriage, the house itself and its name were considered male property; this fact had a critical effect upon the status of widows who did not remarry.

Both the levirate and sororate were practiced by the Haida. A man, however, had considerably more freedom in remarriage than did a woman. A widower was obligated to give the mortuary potlatch for his deceased wife[*] and until he did so he was under obligation to his wife's family. While it was preferred that a deceased woman's sister "take her chair" and accordingly her family would try to hold onto a man that had married into their lineage, once a widower had given the mortuary potlatch he was free to do as he pleased. A widow, on the other hand, was expected to remarry a man of her husband's lineage, either a younger brother or nephew. Church records of the late nineteenth century and recollections by informants suggest that the spouse was often quite junior to the widow. Although an elderly widow exerted considerable influence over her young husband who "was just like a slave to his uncle's wife," a widow had little or no voice in the selection of her new husband. Florence Davidson recounted one such remarriage she had been told of which dated from the mid-nineteenth century. The husband was an eleven-year-old boy, ignorant of what was happening to him as he was dragged from play to the side of a decrepit old widow. Pine (n.d.:43), commenting on the levirate, notes that it "can be interpreted as a sign that the woman was a mere chattel; it is better seen as a way to preserve the woman's high position." The levirate might be interpreted as the *only* way to preserve a woman's high status, for woe beheld the widow who did not remarry. She was not allowed to stay in her former husband's house, and, if lucky, escaped with a few personal belongings when her husband's heir took over the house and its associated property. Masset people cited to me instances when widows hurriedly left their former husbands' houses and, with their children, sought refuge in the home of a matrilineal relative. Widows who did not remarry were pitied and high-ranking people were instructed to be kind to them and offer them food. Widowers, as noted above, did not suffer a symmetrical fate.

Mourning rituals were identical for widow or widower (Murdock, 1934b:373). The aggrieved spouse remained isolated for a period of time and ate very little because, Mrs. Davidson remarked, "if they think nothing of it [death], there's no luck." Mortuary potlatches were given for both men and women, if the deceased were of high rank.

Economics

Although some economic activities such as collecting and cooking shellfish were interchangeable between males and females, in general, the Haida division of labour was marked. Men might beachcomb during the winter following onshore storms to collect clams and cockles that had washed ashore, but clam-digging and the implement of procurement, the gligu (digging stick), were considered a woman's domain. The sexual division of labour was summed up by one Masset man who offered the following comment on the essential property of a newly married couple: "Every man's got to have his fishing line and devilfish stick and every woman her digging stick."

The gathering of plant resources was, of course, woman's and girl's work; young boys did not normally accompany their mothers on such expeditions. Both men and women gathered spruce roots, but the latter dug the small delicate roots used in weaving hats and baskets while the former dug the large roots from which they made fish-traps and snares. Similarly, both sexes collected cedar bark, but the division of labour was distinct; women collected the inner bark for weaving mats and men the large sheets of outer bark used for roofing.

The economic activities in which women did not engage seem to have been natively rationalized and prohibited on the basis of pollution taboos associated with menstruation and reproduction. Fishing lines and hooks, sea-mammal clubs, bows, arrows, and any other items of subsistence technology used by males were kept outside the house and concealed from the view of female members of the household. Menstruating women were believed to have supernatural visual powers capable of causing considerable damage. Were a menstruating woman to see the fishing or hunting equipment all economic endeavours on the part of their male owners would be doomed. If a female were to attempt to hunt or fish, her efforts would be similarly unrewarded. For this reason, the Haida say, women never fished or hunted. Nor did women collect octopus, a commestible shellfish but more commonly used as halibut bait. Were a woman to catch an octopus near its rocky den, the site would be ruined, abandoned forever by all octopus.

---

[*] Murdock (1934b:368) states that a woman's eldest surviving brother gives the potlatch which, though more in accord with the notion that the host of a mortuary potlatch was a member of the deceased's lineage, contradicts Florence Davidson's statement and the few examples I documented from Masset of mortuary poles raised by widowers for their deceased wives.

Male economic activities could additionally be influenced by activities in the domestic sphere. Baby tending, for example, was fraught with potential ruination of male economic prowess. A man might play with his small children, but to handle a soiled or wet baby would diminish his luck at hunting or fishing, perhaps spelling economic disaster for the entire household. To assure the ritual purity of male members of the household, men's clothing was washed separately from that of women and children. Ritual cleanliness brought economic rewards, for "those who were 'clean' were blessed with food and riches." Ritual purity and consequent economic success were also acquired by drinking medicine, a male prerogative. While women could negatively affect men's labour, women's economic efforts were appreciated and admired. A woman adept and quick at slicing fish, for example, commanded considerable esteem for her skill.

The Haida division of labour was based not only on pollution beliefs but also on acknowledged differences in the relative strength of males and females. Florence Davidson noted in this regard, "Men think a lot of their wives; they don't want their wives to get hurt or do heavy work. The men help with heavy things and don't let their wives lift anything heavy."

The sexual division of labour in trading is not clear. Swanton (1909) and Curtis (1916) make no mention of sex roles in trading; Murdock (1934b:377), in his brief discussion of trading partnerships, implies that the parties are male but does not discuss trade more generally. However, accounts of maritime traders from the late eighteenth century, suggest that Haida women played a significant and authoritative role in trading activities at the time of first contact. Joseph Ingraham (1971:132), for example, offers the following comment:

> Here in direct opposition to most other parts of the world, the women maintain a precedency to the men in every point insomuch as a man dares not trade without the concurrence of his wife. Nay, I have often been witness to men being abused by their wives for parting with skins before their approbation was obtained.

The men of the ship *Columbia Rediva* similarly remarked on the ascendant role of Haida women in trade:

> The women in trade, as well in everything else which came within our knowledge, appeared to govern the men; as no one dare to conclude a bargain without first asking his wife's consent; if he did, the moment he went into his canoe he was sure to get a beating . . . and there is no mercy to be expected without the intercession of some kind female (Howay, 1941:208).

On the basis of this and similar evidence from the late eighteenth century, it seems quite possible that women played an authoritative role in trading, particularly as they could hold property independently of their husbands. Given the acknowledged role of men as traders, however, it is likely that they represented their wives in exchange and that the dominant role of women is reflective of the latter's interest in their own property.

Ceremonial Division of Labour

Men and women filled generally complementary roles in ceremonialism. Both sexes hosted potlatches, though the house-building (ẃaləɬ) and mortuary (sik') potlatches were normally sponsored by males,[7] and the tagwaná (female puberty potlatch) was an exclusively female event. Either a man or woman might give a vengenance (gədaŋ) or facesaving (ˁan saŋ ada) potlatch as the occasion was precipitated by some impertinence shown the individual or some embarrassment suffered, regardless of sex.

Women were recipients of potlatch wealth and, as children at their father's potlatches, received equal attention to males in the form of tattoos and honorific names. A woman might also be selected to perform ceremonial labour at a potlatch, such as the preparation of new house timbers. Though her husband performed the work in her stead, she received the actual payment for the service (Murdock, 1936:5).

Potlatches were the only occasions when high-ranking individuals were initiated into the dancing societies, which were recently acquired (eighteenth century), attenuated versions of Kwakiutl dances. Depending on the source consulted, the Haida had between six and eleven such dances. Curtis (1916:142) noted that "women were barred from the more important dances," and Swanton's (1909:161ff) catalogue of dances by sex of the performers concurs with Curtis' generalization.

---

[7] Murdock (1936:12) argues that a woman (the wife of the new house owner) was the actual host of the ẃaləɬ potlatch. Rosman and Rubel (1971:57-64) following Swanton (1909) present a convincing argument that the man was the potlatch host. I have suggested (Blackman 1977:45) that while the male role may receive the most emphasis, the ẃaləɬ may be interpreted as hosted by a man and his wife. It is worth mention, however, that even Murdock (1936:19) notes that a woman could not potlatch for her children (ẃaləɬ) by herself.

Murdock (1936:4) describes several other dances that punctuated potlatch celebrations, but in these the sexual division was not so marked. In a dance (sa'adál) performed for potlatch guests by men and women of the host's village, the men, but not the women, carried rattles. Pine (n.d.:74) concludes from this that "... the men alone could carry rattles and wear the amhalait headdress. The rattles and amhalaits were the material paraphernalia representing the power and authority of the chief, and thus belonged in the realm of external male power and authority." Murdock (1936:5) though, indicates that women could wear the amhalait.

> The sa'ága is danced by one or two men or women ... The performers wear elaborate headresses consisting of a tall cylinder of beautifully carved and inlaid wood with a tail or ermine skins behind and circle of sea lion whiskers around the top. The crown is filled with the down of eagles ...

However, in reference to the aforementioned dancing societies, Pine (n.d.:79) is probably correct in her statement that

> The novices or the initiated members of the secret societies male or female, had access to the power-authority paraphernalia of the chiefs, and sexual difference had little to do with the wearing or use of it. In all other occasions the chief's paraphernalia, with the rare exception of the case of a female chief, who would be seen as a social male, was used strictly by males.

Women's roles in feasting are not clear. Murdock (1934b:364-65) cites evidence indicating that women not only attended but hosted feasts at which males were present. Swanton's (1909: 179ff) description of the sik' potlatch implies that both males and females were guests at Haida feasts. Florence Davidson, on the other hand, stated that prior to her time, only men used to attend and host feasts and that attendance at feasts by couples is a relatively recent practice inaugurated during her early childhood.[8] Regardless of the discrepancy, it is clear that women's participation in feasting increased dramatically in the twentieth century (see below).

The most important ceremonial role a women played was as a sqa?an, a father's sister (or, more generally, female of father's lineage). This role was not matched by a male role of similar ritual significance. The sqa?an was critical to the social livelihood of her brother's children from the moment of their birth to their placement in the grave. She cut the umbilical cord, was the ritual if not actual tattooer of the children, tended to her brother's daughters during their puberty seclusion and witnessed their emergence into womanhood. Regardless of whether her brother's son married her daughter, she was present at the marriage to usher the bride to her nephew's side, and according to Murdock (1934b:364) she gave the wedding feast. Her own name might eventually be passed on to her brother's son's daughter. The sqa?an's final ritual duty in the life cycle of a brother's child was to prepare the body at death, washing it and laying it out to receive mourners. Today the modern legacy of this final ritual act, all that survives of the father's sister's ritual obligations to her brother's child, is realized when the deceased's sqa?an washes off the headstone before it is placed on the grave.

Cultural Specialists

Positions of external authority—household, lineage and town chieftainships—were regarded as male occupations, though aboriginal examples of women chiefs are not unknown (cf. Curtis, 1916:172). The occupation of chiefships by women became more common in late post-contact times. Dawson (1880:118B), in this regard, notes, "Only recently and because of the depletion of the population have women succeeded to the seats of nobility." Contemporary Masset people confirmed this statement, noting one case from the late nineteenth century where a woman assumed a lineage chieftainship only because there were no male heirs; when her own son became an adult, the position was passed on to him. Women did, however, regularly participate in lineage councils in aboriginal times (Murdock, 1936:17), and accordingly had a voice in the selection of successors to lineage and town chieftainships.

Shamanism was a speciality open to both males and females though ethnographic accounts imply that most practitioners were males. One might suspect that a female shaman would be at a certain disadvantage (unless past menopause) as Dawson (1880:137B) remarks, "Females except old women and girls under the age of puberty were barred from the house in which a shaman was at work lest someone in her periods blight his power." The literature does not indicate that female shamans must be past the climacteric, nor is there any reason to believe that female shamanic powers were any diminished from those of males. Florence Davidson recalled a woman shaman from her childhood who commanded the respect of the village because, long before its occurrence, she had predicted World War I.

---

[8] The fact that "couples" began attending feasts together also points to the breakdown of moiety separation. Traditionally, one feasted members of the opposite moiety.

In aesthetic specialities there were marked male/female differences. What is normally regarded as Haida "art" was a masculine art; the painting or carving of mythological or crest figures were male prerogatives. Pine aptly notes (n.d.:65) that male designs "served to inform the rest of the world of the crests, and consequently the prestige, of the lineage. Designs used by women, on the other hand, had no recognizable social status..." This division of aesthetic labour serves to explain why women assigned the ritual task of tattooing a brother's child, delegated the task to a male (cf. Murdock, 1936:8, Curtis, 1916:125); tattoos were crest art.

Women's art, in contrast to that of males, was geometric, confined to the decorative weaving of spruce root and cedar bark. It derived from natural forms ("snail's tracks," for example, was a common hat-brim pattern), not from mythological or sociological sources. Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic crest designs were not a woman's domain, and this division of aesthetic labour persisted well into the twentieth century. Button blankets, for instance, were and are designed by men, cut and appliqued by women. In 1939, Florence Davidson, at her husband's behest, designed and painted the prow of a canoe he and his brother had built which was purchased by a buyer from the States. But, fearful of impinging upon a male tradition and of consequent public criticism, Mrs. Davidson worked on the design early in the morning before the villagers were up and about. "I was ashamed if they saw me doing that and they make fun of me," she reflected. But the design of the canoe prow was successful and the people were surprised. "Of course her dad [Charles Edenshaw] was clever," they offered in explanation.

Cultural Values

Haida women were valued as perpetuators of the lineage and it was anticipated that a woman would bear many children (ten, a ritually significant number, was mentioned as an ideal by Mrs. Davidson). The reproductive power a woman possessed, to employ a Lévi-Straussian dichotomy (cf. Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974:30), was natural, not cultural. Women had life-giving (childbearing) or death-bringing powers (they could cause their husband's deaths in warfare) because of their physiological functions; these powers developed as they matured but were not actively acquired. Men, on the other hand, had culturally bestowed powers, acquired through observing prescriptions (drinking medicine, following certain hunting rules) and proscriptions (avoidance of female powers). Female power was serendipitious in effecting results, kept under control by observance of taboos, but not manipulated to effect results. A woman would not consider violating pollution taboos to negatively influence hunting or war activities of Haida men.

The marked pollution taboos which coloured relationships between males and females may well have been rationalized on the grounds that women were believed to be the sexual aggressors. In this regard, James Deans (1891:23, cited in Pine, n.d.:51) emphatically states, "... their [Haida] women considered it their duty to encourage at all times sexual intercourse." If Deans is correct, the taboos then could have served to contain and confine potentially disruptive female sexual aggression.

In other areas, however, women were regarded as far from aggressive. As previously noted, among the desirable feminine characteristics were modesty and a retiring disposition. Women were the weaker sex both mentally and physically. "If they want to do anything, they [men] thought they [women] can't do it," Florence Davidson explained in regard to the competence of women. But there was room for individual variation from this norm. Coming from a family with a dearth of males, Mrs. Davidson was instructed by her father and mother's brother: "Don't be hopeless, like a girl." Perhaps because she heeded their advice, she became the very strong and respected woman that she is today.

A common theme running through the analysis of matrilineal societies is that women enjoy, if not external authority, culturally favourable status simply by virtue of the fact that descent is traced through females who are seen as the focus of the entire social structure (Martin and Voorhies, 1975:224-25). Quinn's (1977:211-15) recent review of the data, on the contrary, brings together evidence that the status of women in matrilineal societies is a function of several variables, among them, residence patterns, the organization of the domestic group, and the division of domestic authority. In the case of the Haida, the decision-making powers women have in lineage councils, their property-holding rights, and the potential for female succession to chieftainships can all be attributed to an idealogy of matrilineal descent. Other variables which suggest a lowering of female status (personality attributes, physical and mental inferiority to men, pollution taboos) can perhaps be seen as indirect consequences of the status benefits of matrilineal descent. In this respect, Quinn (1977:219) remarks, "male dominance myths, far from reflecting women's overall low status, arise precisely because women have considerable economic importance, personal autonomy, and domestic influence."

Culture Contact and Sex Roles

Contact and Euro-Canadian culture wrought both subtle and profound changes in traditional Haida sex roles; these changes were not necessarily uniform and the status of women very likely fluctuated with the varying agents and events of culture change. The early maritime trade of the late eighteenth century and the subsequent trade, dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company, the contact culture experienced in Victoria, wage labour, the dramatic population decline of the 1860s and 1870s, missionization, and the Indian Act, all contributed in varying ways to shaping the emergent role of Haida women.

The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Maritime Trade

Accounts by maritime traders, cited earlier, stressed the pre-eminent role of Haida women in trading. Other features of this early trade with Euro-Americans, however, point to the clear-cut dominance of native males in the trading economy of 1785-1825. Firstly, the trade was based on the exchange of sea otter furs. While the processing of these furs was a female task, the hunting of sea otter was a prestigious and ritually imbued activity of high-ranking males. So also were the formalities of trading. One has only to consider the intensity and magnitude of the trade to see how dominant it loomed in the lives of the Haida, particularly Haida males. Wike (1951:10) estimates that during about a 25-year period, American traders (the most active in the trade) acquired 350,000 otter pelts from the natives along the coast, the bulk of which came from Haida and Nootka territories. In return, the natives received some seven million dollars worth of goods. Increasing energy was diverted from other areas of culture into the hunting, processing, and trading of sea otter furs and the foreign demand for them grew. This demand affected males more than females as the former were both the hunters and primary traders. The variety of goods introduced to the natives likewise suggests a male emphasis in the trading economy. Though flour, cloth, kettles and other utensils, decorative items such as Chinese coins, mirrors, and thimbles could be counted as women's goods, the staple items of the trade, iron tools and guns, were male goods. In sum, the maritime trade might be viewed from an economic perspective as having stimulated male domains of Haida culture, though not necessarily at the expense of female domains.

In another respect, however, the maritime trade may have contributed to the degradation of Haida and other women of the Northwest Coast. Women were offered to white traders, perhaps as part of the ritual exchange between the trading parties. Caamaño (1792:326), for example, notes, "It caused them no little wonder that we did not appropriate the women that we understood that they brought for that purpose, since they were accustomed to having the English, and the others who come to these places to trade, not only accept their women, but also ask for them and select them." His remark is verified by another account, that from the ship *Eliza*. Describing events from Kiusta on the northwest corner of the Queen Charlotte Islands, the log keeper relates, "The old woman proceeded to the last offer of friendship, which was a lady for the night, out of her numerous seraglio, with which she accomodates all vessells (*sic*) that stop here" (cited in Duff, n.d.). Caamaño's account contains the suggestions that women offered by trading chiefs were not high ranking but perhaps slaves. Anchored at Dadens in 1792, he reports that he was offered the chief's daughter "so that I might enjoy her." It seems doubtful if the girl in question was the chief's daughter as Caamaño adds, "She had no tablet in her lower lip and was quite pleasing in appearance" (Caamaño, 1792:337). The social status of women mentioned in other accounts is not clear.

Successful and long-term liasons between Haida women and white men early in the nineteenth century are recounted in Haida oral tradition, and later prostitution in Victoria during the 1860s, in some cases anyway, offered economic and social advantages in native society. The negative effects of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century prostitution, however, are pointedly noted by Jonathon Green, a Methodist missionary who visited the Queen Charlottes and southeastern Alaska in 1829, just after the decline in the sea otter trade. Green (1915:68) remarks that he learned from a Kaigani (Alaskan) Haida chief "that all the young women of the tribe [Kaigani] visit ships for the purpose of gain by prostitution, and in most cases destroy their children, the fruit of this infamous intercourse." Mitchell (1976:117), reviewing the effects of prostitution upon Coast Salish women of the last century, concludes, "Prostitution was a colonial phenomenon reflecting the tendency for women to bear, very directly, the initial brunt of a general lowering of social status and disruption of traditional roles."

After the turn of the nineteenth century the economic position of Haida women was likely enhanced by the addition of the potato to the native economy. Introduced by traders in the late eighteenth century, the potato was intensively cultivated by Haida women of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and, by the 1840s, several hundred bushels were being traded annually to the Tsimshian and the Hudson's Bay Company at Ft. Simpson (Dunn, 1846:41). The potato trade was relatively short-lived, however, as after 1850 potato cultivation was undertaken by Hudson's Bay Company employees at Ft. Simpson.

The Contact Culture in Mid-century Victoria

By the late 1850s the Haida were increasingly frequenting Victoria where they traded at the Hudson's Bay Company post, availed themselves of a supply of illegal liquor from "whiskey traders," traded and feuded with local as well as other northern native groups, and found themselves entangled in scuffles with the law. Along with groups of Tlingit and Tsimshian, many Haida wintered in Victoria encamped in the vicinity of the Hudson's Bay Company post. The scope of this migration of northern peoples to Victoria is indicated in news items from the *British Colonist*:

> About 80 canoes containing nearly 1000 Indians arrived on Thursday, from Queen Charlotte's Island (April 23, 1859, p. 2.).
>
> On Tuesday evening we counted, from Esquimalt bridge, fifty-four canoes, filled with Hyder and Stikeen Indians, just arrived from the North. These Indians have been expected by their friends who wintered here, for some time, and yesterday crowded our principal streets, offering furs and trinkets for sale (April 5, 1860, p. 2).

These migrations must have disrupted winter village life as large numbers of natives, normally resident in winter settlements on the Queen Charlottes, now opted for a winter of urban squatting. Though ceremonial patterns which were part of village life may have carried over to the urban camps, there is no reference in the Provincial Archives' index of news items on the Haida to feasting, potlatching or dance performances. Nor were these activities mentioned in the *British Colonist* during 1862, a year for which I read every issue of the paper.

The white populace of Victoria became increasingly concerned with the large encampments of natives on the edge of town and various attempts were made to confine and curtail native activities. Many northern native women, however, spent much of their time within the town limits where they staffed the "dance halls" or houses of prostitution. Unfortunately, little mention is made of prostitution in the newspapers save the occasional arrest of a streetwalker. Francis Poole, a civil and mining engineer who explored the Queen Charlotte Islands during 1862-63, suggests that prostitution served to enhance the status of Haida women:

> Not only does no dishonour attach to that degrading practice, but if successful in making money, it is highly honoured. I remember one singular case of this. Some Queen Charlotte women went to spent the Winter at Victoria, hoping to "earn blankets." They came back loaded with blankets, trinkets, tobacco, whisky, and other presents, which they proceeded to distribute among their people . . . (Poole, 1872:312-13).

Though evidently in some instances new economic wealth from prostitution allowed women to independently participate in potlatching, other writers of the time, such as Krause (1886:207) and Jackson (1880:118) paint a much grimmer picture which emphasizes the exploitation of women by men. Jackson, for example, describes the fate of Kaigani Haida and Tlingit women: "They are sometimes . . . sent to the mines, while the husband lives in idleness at home on the wages of their immorality." In the long run, the effects of prostitution were disastrous, for the tolls exacted in the population far offset any immediate economic gains. Duff (1964:43) describes the general trend: "Venereal disease, a result of prevalent prostitution, killed many and rendered infertile many more."

Life in Victoria and large-scale prostitution came to an end in the years following the smallpox epidemic of 1862. Introduced by a miner from San Francisco, the disease had a devastating effect upon the vulnerable, unvaccinated natives but left the White population of the area virtually untouched. The tragedy of the smallpox epidemic is vividly evoked in reports from the *British Colonist*:

> The Northern Indians will be sent from the reserve today to one of the islands in the Straits—there to rot and die with the loathsome disease which is now destroying the poor wretches at the rate of six each day (May 13, 1862, p. 3).
>
> . . . the Indians recently sent north from here are dying very fast. So soon as pustules appear on an occupant of one of the canoes, he is put ashore; a small piece of muslin, to serve as a tent, is raised over him, a small allowance of bread, fish and water doled out and he is left alone to die (June 14, 1862, p. 3).

The Population Decline and After

The population decline resulting from the smallpox epidemic was swift and dramatic in its proportions. By 1885, the Haida population had reached 13 percent of its former numbers (Duff, 1964:39). This reduction had a significant effect upon the status of women, who, on the one hand, found their traditional roles of childbearing and rearing ever more critical as numerous lineages were threatened with extinction, while on the other hand, they began assuming positions of authority outside the domestic realm, taking up chieftainships when there were no male heirs to fill the positions. The ascendancy they may have enjoyed as chiefs, however, was brief, for the combined effects of the Indian Act which allowed for a system of elected band councillors, the Indian Reserve Commission which divided up lineage land holdings, and the missionaries who persuaded several leading chiefs to forego potlatching (cf. Blackman, 1977 for discussion of these factors) served to reduce the power and authority of the hereditary chiefs. Furthermore, as previously noted on page 70, a woman chief was regarded as an anomaly and every effort was made to transfer the position to a male.

The missionaries who arrived among the Haida in 1876 brought to the native cultures a domestic structure which more accurately represented the acculturating society. Heretofore, white women had not really been part of the contact culture, except perhaps peripherally in Victoria. But missionaries came to the native communities with wives and families. Though the culture and religion they brought were patriarchial, several of the changes they effected among the Haida enhanced the status of native women. The missionary wife, for example, created a special interest group of Haida women. An auxiliary to the newly founded mission church, the "White Cross *jade*" ("women") regularly met for bible readings and hymn singing, sewing and handiwork, put on basket socials to raise money for the church, tended to the dead and assisted bereaved families. The group later evolved into the Women's Auxiliary of the Anglican Church (today the Anglican Church Women). The founding of this social group set up a communications network among all community women which had heretofore not existed.

Ceremonial patterns were also greatly altered by the missionaries, a point I have dealt with in some detail in other publications (Blackman, 1973, 1977). Pertinent here, however, is the fact that the Anglican missionaries undercut the male emphasis present in feasting. They stressed commensality among men and women and set an example by inviting couples to the mission house to dine. Though one missionary, J. H. Keen, attempted to break the pattern of feasting large numbers of guests by encouraging only small dinner parties, the feasting complex held sway though, superficially, it came to resemble the Sunday mission-house dinners. By the end of the nineteenth century, feasts were given not only for traditional reasons (taking and keeping the chief's place, marriage, death), but also in celebration of Christian holidays. A significant material cultural change was a factor in the acculturation of feasting and in the increasingly important role women came to play in it. Traditional feasting equipment—carved spoons, grease bowls, and the larger carved feast bowls—was men's property, created by male artists and carvers. These items were replaced in the latter part of the nineteenth century by bone china, silverware, and tablecloths, all women's property.

Cultural changes of the late nineteenth century also included the expanded participation of women in the potlatching complex. This can be seen as the result of two seemingly opposing phenomena. On the one hand, the hosting of potlatches by women is a logical concommitant of their assumption of chieftainships and therefore traditional. On the other hand, women's more active roles in potlatching were a product of acculturation, possibly related to Anglican influences on the traditional mortuary potlatch and very definitely linked to changes in marriage patterns. I suspect that the active role women played in the church as fund-raisers and sponsors of social events carried over to their assuming more active roles in Anglicanized mortuary potlatches as organizers, speechmakers, and, eventually, as hosts. This was facilitated by abolishment of the levirate and changes in inheritance patterns, a change promoted by Rev. Charles Harrison, missionary at Masset in the early 1880s. Harrison believed, rightly, that traditional marriage practices discriminated against widows. As noted earlier, a widow who did not remarry was forced to vacate her deceased husband's home and seek refuge in a house owned by her own lineage. Many of these widows were not only dependant but destitute. As a result of missionary efforts and, later, the application of the Indian Act, women were allowed a share of their husband's estates. This, in turn, has provided the means for the participation of elderly women in the ceremonial complex.

Not all missionary endeavours nor all governmental actions relating to the Haida and other native groups in British Columbia around the turn of the century, enhanced the status of women. After all, both missionaries and government legislators and administrators were male members of a patriarchial society. The Indian Act, as a product of that society, is a classic case in point. Several writers, including native women themselves (cf. Cheda, 1970: 64-65) have pointed out that, in defining Indian Band membership, the Indian Act is flagrantly biased against women, and Mitchell (1976) has demonstrated how this bias detrimentally affects modern Coast Salish women and their access to housing.

The changes that occurred in another area of Haida potlatching illustrate the further negative effects of the infliction of patriarchial, Victorian values upon a native society. By the 1920s the puberty potlatch (təgwaná) and its attendant seclusion had ceased. The former significance of this potlatch for Haida women is exemplified in the last large təgwəná given—for a girl who never went through menarche. The girl's mother believed the rite of passage so important that she gave the potlatch anyway and, as if to compensate for what everyone knew had not occurred, invited men as well as women, distributing large quantities of property. When I asked her why the Haida discontinued the təgwaná, Florence Davidson replied, "They became ashamed of it." As in many other traditional cultures, menstruation was not regarded as shameful by the Haida. In traditional Haida society, the monthly seclusions, the concealment of the hunting and fishing gear, the active avoidance of male possessions by menstruating women, and the təgwəná celebration, were all public advertisements of femaleness. Menstruation was not cloaked in secrecy; rather, public knowledge of it was to everyone's advantage. The repression of these pollution taboos and the consequent repression of natural female power, reflect the Haida adoption of Euro-Canadian values, the values of a Victorian and patriarchial society.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has investigated several selected domains of Haida culture to detail the traditional status of Haida women and the changes that affected women's status from the latter part of the eighteenth century to the early years of the present century. Various ethnographic and ethnohistorical sources have been drawn upon, and data from life history interviews with Florence Davidson of Masset have served as a focus for the discussion of women's roles.

The material presented by Quinn (1977) in her article reviewing the status of women suggests that while their status may be low in some cultural realms, it may be high in others. It may also fluctuate in relationship to the life cycle. For the Haida female, status was perhaps lowest at the time of marriage and during the early childbearing years when a women was a younger member of an extended family household and under the authority of her husband's mother's brother's wife. The status of a Haida woman was highest under the following circumstances: when she occupied a specialist role such as a shaman; when she contributed property to and participated in her husband's potlatches or hosted other types of potlatches on her own; when she performed ritual acts as a father's sister (sqaʔan); when as a widow she remarried her husband's nephew over whom she had virtually complete control. Though aboriginally Haida women occupied a relatively high overall status as demonstrated in their access to numerous domains of the culture, Haida society was still a male dominated one. Men were the final authorities of the household and the holders of positions of political authority. They alone were the hosts of the most important types of potlatches, the owners of the most important property (houses and totem poles), the performers of the most prestigious rituals (dances), the creators and monopolizers of an art form whose symbols represented the matrilineal groups they dominated.

The ethnohistorical view of the status of Haida women indicates that women's status has fluctuated throughout the period of acculturation. The position of women was strengthened at times when new economic opportunities were opened tʌ̃ them (potato growing and, later, perhaps prostitution) and when certain changes were effected in the social order (the creation of a women's interest group under missionization and changes in marriage practices). Demographic changes facilitated the entry of women into positions that were formerly male prerogatives and women's greater leadership roles in potlatching and festing derived in part from those same changes. The increasingly active role of women in the ceremonial complex was also encouraged by material changes which (1) gave women the means with which to host potlatches and feasts (inheritance of husbands' estates) and (2) identified the symbols of feasting as women's property. The status of women was detrimentally affected by other acculturative processes. The Indian Act, a product of a patriarchial Victorian society, undermined traditional and hereditary authority and effectively placed all decision making in the hands of an elected male council. Criteria for Indian Band membership, defined by the Act, made women's legal status much less secure (Mitchell, 1976: 172). The same acculturative philosophy that created the Indian Act deemed the public acknowledgement of women's natural reproductive functions shameful, and while this marked an end to pollution taboos and possibly to certain antagonisms between males and females, it also meant an end to the natural power that women enjoyed and the special public recognition of their femaleness.

Space has not allowed consideration of the multitude of changes in women's lives among the Haida since the early twentieth century, nor comparison of the changes in the status of Haida women with changes in the status of women in other Northwest Coast groups. Comparative study would yield both similarities and differences. The detrimental effects of the Indian Act upon Coast Salish women described by Mitchell could apply in large part to the Haida as well; on the other hand, the active political role assumed by modern Tlingit women (Sutton *et al.*, 1975) is not paralleled in Haida society. This may in part be attributable to the effect the Indian Act has had on shaping the status of native Canadian women. In other areas of native culture, however, Haida women have taken increasingly active roles. A single example may suffice. I began this paper with a review of Northwest Coast life-history materials and, among them, mentioned Barbeau's *Haida Carvers in Argillite* which discusses the lives and works of the known male argillite carvers. It is fitting to note, in conclusion, that were *Haida Carvers* . . . to be updated to include the burgeoning number of young artists, included in the entries would be the names of several women, among them the direct descendants of Charles Edenshaw. Had Wilson Duff lived to complete his works on Haida art he surely would have noted this important trend.

Bibliography

Barbeau, M.
1957 Haida Carvers in Argillite. National Museum of Man, Bulletin 139.

Blackman, M. B.
1973 Totems to Tombstones: Culture Change as Viewed through the Haida Mortuary Complex, 1877-1971. Ethnology 12:47-56.

1977 Ethnohistoric Changes in the Haida Potlatch Complex. Arctic Anthropology 14:39-53.

in press During My Time: The Life History of Florence Edenshaw Davidson, a Haida Woman. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

British Colonist
1859 Haidah Indians. April 23, 1859, p. 2.
1860 More Indians. April 5, 1860, p. 2.
1862 The Smallpox. May 13, 1862, p. 3.
1862 Lo! The Poor Indian. June 14, 1862, p. 3.

Caamaño, J.
1792 An Extract from the Log of the Voyages, Exploration, and Discoveries made in North America by don Jacinto Caamaño . . . Unpublished manuscript on file at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria.

Campbell, M.
1973 Halfbreed. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Cheda, S.
1973 Indian Women: A Historical Example and a Contemporary View. In, Women In Canada, pp. 58-70. Marylee Stephenson (ed.) New Press, Toronto.

Curtis, E. S.
1916 The Haida. The North American Indian, Vol. II:115-75; 186-93. Norwood, Illinois.

Dawson, G. M.
1880 Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress for 1878-79.

Deans, J.
1891 Carved Columns or Totem Poles, the Haidas. American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal, 13:282-87.

Dorsey, G.
1898 A Cruise Among the Haida and Tlingit Villages about Dixon's Entrance. Appleton's Popular Science Monthly, June:1-15.

Duff, W.
1964 The Indian History of British Columbia. Vol. I: The Impact of the White Man. Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir No. 5.
n.d. Unpublished notes on the Haida.

Dunn, J.
1846 History of the Oregon Territory. London.

Ford, C.
1941 Smoke from their Fires: The Life of a Kwakiutl Chief. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Goldman, I.
1975 The Mouth of Heaven: An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought. John Wiley, New York.

Green, J.
1915 Journal of a Tour on the North West Coast of America in the Year 1829. Frederick Heartman, New York.

Harris, C.
1966 Raven's Cry. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Harrison, C.
1912 History of the Queen Charlotte Islands: The Haida and their Legends. Queen Charlotte Islander Vol. 1, No. 38 (May 20, 1912).

Howay, F. W. (ed.)
1941 Voyages of the Columbia to the Northwest Coast 1787-1790 and 1790-1793. The Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

Ingraham, J.
1971 Joseph Ingraham's Journal of the Brigantine *Hope* on a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of North America, 1790-92. (Edited, with notes and an Introduction, by Mark D. Kaplanoff.) Imprint Society, Barre, Massachusetts.

Jackson, S.
1880 Alaska and Missions on the North Pacific Coast. Dodd, Mead, New York.

Jenness, D.
1955 The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian. Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir No. 3:1-92.

Krause, A.
1885 The Tlingit Indians. Translated by Erna Gunther. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

La Pérouse, J. F. G. de
1798 La Pérouse Voyage Round the World Performed in the Years 1785-1788. (Translated from the French in 2 vols.) London.

Lurie, N.
1961 Mountain Wolf Woman, Sister of Crashing Thunder. Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Marriott, A.
1948 Maria: The Potter of San Ildefonso. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Martin, M. K. and B. Voorhies
1975 Female of the Species. Columbia University Press, New York.

Mitchell, M.
1976 Women, Poverty, Housing: Some Consequences of Hinterland Status for a Coast Salish Indian Reserve in Metropolitan Canada. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia.

Murdock, G. P.
1934a The Haidas of British Columbia. In, Our Primitive Contemporaries, pp. 221-263. McGraw Hill, New York.

1934b Kinship and Social Behavior Among the Haida. American Anthropologist 36:355-385.

1936 Rank and Potlatch Among the Haida. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 13.

Pine, F.
n.d. The Power and Authority of Women in Haida Society. Unpublished Manuscript.

Poole, F.
1872 Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific. Hurst and Blacklett, London.

Quinn, N.
1977 Anthropological Studies on Women's Status. Annual Review of Anthropology 6:181-225.

Rosaldo, M. and L. Lamphere
1974 Women, Culture and Society. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Rosman, A. and P. Rubel
1971 Feasting with Mine Enemy: Rank and Exchange Among Northwest Coast Societies. Columbia University Press, New York.

Sapir, E.
1921 The Life of a Nootka Indian. Queen's Quarterly 28:232-243; 351-367.

Spradley, J.
1969 Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, a Kwakiutl Indian. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Sutton, C. *et. al.*
1975 Women, Knowledge and Power. In, Women Cross-Culturally: Change and Challenge, pp. 581-600. Ruby Leavitt (ed.), Aldine, Chicago.

Swanton, J.
1909 Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida. American Museum of Natural History, Memoir 8.

Thomas, S.
1967 The Life and Work of Charles Edenshaw: a Study of Innovation. Unpublished graduating essay, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Washburne, H.
1940 Land of the Good Shadows: The Life Story of Anauta, an Eskimo Woman. John Day, New York.

Wike, J.
1951 The Effect of the Maritime Fur Trade on the Northwest Coast Indian Societies. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

Willis, J.
1972 Geneish: An Indian Girlhood. New Press, Toronto.

Sebassa's Men

Donald H. Mitchell
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Some of the material on which this study is based was kindly made available by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia; by the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, The National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada; and by the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

In recent years, the wealth of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Northwest Coast ethnography has come to be viewed as something less than a satisfying legacy. Despite the apparent richness of the record it seems when you get down to close examination of the material that we are really not so well off. For some kinds of activities and for some characteristics of a few groups we have a great deal of information but for other aspects and other groups there is disappointingly little.

One consequence has been that over time the quite specific characteristics of such groups as the Fort Rupert Kwakiutl and the Metlakatla Tsimshian have come to stand for all Southern Kwakiutl and all Coast Tsimshian. Such generalization masks the differences that undoubtedly obtained between the various neighbouring local groups although it is just such variation that is of interest to present-day anthropology. No search for explanation of human behaviour gets very far if it can deal only with generalizations about the actions of broadly defined groups.

To use an example relating closely to the objective of this paper, although our traditional ethnographic sources make it very clear that people of the coast moved their settlements several times a year in pursuit of food and other important resources, with rare exception you will search the literature in vain for details about these moves. The specifics are, in fact, thin even for those groups whose activities we may consider otherwise reasonably fully described. Yet this is the kind of basic detail required before we can begin to understand the reasons underlying the pattern of seasonal movement and before we can begin to appreciate the impact of the different moves on the lives of the people.

This paper, an exercise in ethnohistoric reconstruction, is a contribution towards providing the kind of data needed.[1] Its focus is the round of activities of a single Coast Tsimshian local group—the Kitkatla—and the purpose is to reconstruct, in as much detail as possible, their movements over a single year. The year selected is 1835, chosen for the existence of three excellent diaries of that year, kept by Hudson's Bay Company servants at posts near traditional Kitkatla territory.

The principal sources for the inquiry, then, are historic documents—diaries written with no thought that daily entries of what to the writers seemed interesting would be asked to yield the kind of information demanded by studies such as this. Fortunately, in addition to the terse Fort Simpson post journal, presumably kept by Peter Skene Ogden, we are also dealing with the journals of two intelligent and interested observers: William Fraser Tolmie (1963) and John Work (1945).

The portion of Tolmie's journal that is relevant covers his stay at Fort McLoughlin between December 23, 1833, and December 23, 1835, at which date the daily record of events halts to be taken up almost a year later when he is back in Fort Vancouver. Tolmie was a medical doctor by training, a compulsive reader of moral and medical treatises, history, biography, and natural history, and an enthusiastic examiner of all that surrounded him. Spare hours were spent collecting the unfamiliar things about the fort—birds, plants, or Indian vocabulary or customs, whatever caught his attention. We could wish he had committed much more to writing but can at least be comforted that what is recorded is the selection of a decidedly above-average observer.

---

[1] Except for a single volume, *The Impact of the White Man*, and two partially-completed manuscripts, the most ambitious task Wilson Duff had set himself—to write the Indian history of British Columbia—was unrealized at his death. There is little doubt that his deeply-rooted habit of careful scholarship would eventually have produced an ethnohistoric work of great value. As I am sure many of us will repeat over the coming years, we are very much the losers for his passing. I like to think that the small fragment of the past recovered in *Sebassa's Men* would have been appreciated by Wilson as a contribution to his grander project. And given the obvious delight he took in identifying great men from the "forgotten" Indian past, it is likely, too, that our intimations of Sebassa the man would have intrigued Wilson as much as they have me.

John Work was considerably older than Tolmie (Work, in fact, was later to become Tolmie's father-in-law) and by the mid-1830s he had been ten years in the Pacific Northwest fur trade. Work's diary entries are understandably brief and matter-of-fact, the daily record of a trader engaged in very familiar activity in familiar surroundings. Fortunately for us he found it worthwhile to note the whereabouts of those with whom he traded, so his sometimes laconic record nonetheless contains much of value for this study.

Work's journal covers his stay at Fort Simpson from February 10 to September 8, 1835. During this time he was away from the fort for about two months aboard the *Lama* and part of that time was spent looking for the Kitkatla.

The Kitkatla are a Coast Tsimshian group who today mainly reside at what for several generations has been their traditional winter village on Dolphin Island, about 37 miles south of Prince Rupert. Tolmie (1963, pp. 311, 313) several times refers to the people by this name but he, Work, and other traders most frequently wrote of the Sebassa or Sabassa men (e.g., Tolmie, 1963, p. 311; Work, 1945, p. 29) or simply the Sebassa, Sabassa, Shebases (e.g., Dunn, 1844, p. 273; Green, 1915, p. 63), Cibasis (Simpson 1831-32, fo. 92d), or Chebbaskah (Sturgis, 1978, p. 90). The link between these two names is provided by Tolmie (1963, p. 311) who records a visit June 2, 1835, by "two canoes of Kitchaatla or Sebassa men" and throughout an account of troubles later that summer he uses the names interchangeably. Douglas (1840, p. 139) also clearly equates the "Kitchaatlah" and Sebassa.

Sebassa was as well the name of a prominent Kitkatla. Tolmie (1963, p. 307) refers to a visit from Sebassa and his brother and Work (1945, p. 33) writes of "Chief Sabassas." A Chief Shebashes of the Gitkatla refused to give testimony to the 1916 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs. Boas (1916, p. 295) writes of "Chief Dzēbása" as one of the six chiefs of Prairie Town who migrated to the coast and Garfield (1939, p. 179), who makes reference to "Dzi˝basa, Gıtxała chief," also speaks of him as one of the chiefs who came from Təmlaxam (Prairie Town).[2] Finally, Barbeau (1950, p. 473) mentions "Tseebasae, chief of the Gispewudwades of the Gitrhahla tribe of the Tsimsyans" and "Tsyebasae, head chief of the Gitrhahla tribe on Porcher Island" (1950, p. 454).

The name "Sebassa" applies in each of the foregoing instances to an individual but it should be obvious that Work's "Chief Sebasses" of 1835 is neither the "Chief Shebashes" of the 1916 enquiry into the allocation of reserve land nor likely the "Chief Dzēbása" who moved from Prairie Town to the coast. "Sebassa," of course, is a title, a high-ranking and valued name passed through the generations in the Tsimshian fashion from a man to his brother or, more likely, his sister's son. A clear indication that this particular name was so transmitted is provided by Garfield's (1939, pp. 179-180) account of succession on the death of the individual who was probably Work and Tolmie's Sebassa. Although there was a rival claim for the valued name, it was a nephew who first organized his resources and successfully gained recognition of his right.

Garfield (1939, p. 337) also tells us that the name meant "Eyes closed all Day (*tsip*, 'closed eyes', *a*—'to', *sa* 'day')" although Boas (1890, p. 93) had suggested it either meant "overcast sky = close eye sky" or perhaps "fastened talons (of eagle)." Barbeau (1950, p. 512, fn) attributes to it a Bella Bella meaning—"place of holding talons." Whatever the derivation, its holder was a powerful figure in Kitkatla society—powerful and prominent enough that, so far as the traders were concerned, his name could stand for the whole group.

There is reason to believe the name identified two additional Kitkatla social units. Beynon(1953,vol.5,p.28) wrote of "the chiefly house of t'sibaesáe " and in notes on information provided by Edward Gamble("Gitxata. . . of the group of tsiebasɛ") Barbeau (File A VII 29b, p. 22) records the "Houses of Tsiebasɛ" in first position and lists for that "house," six subdivisions, the first of which is "Tsiebasɛ."

A "house" was a category of social unit which Garfield described in 1939 but which she dropped without explanation in her later (Garfield, 1951) summary of Tsimshian society. Lying between the "clan" and the lineage in her scheme of descent groups, it is perhaps in modern anthropological parlance most usefully viewed as a sort of maximal lineage.

From what Garfield (1939) and Adams (1973) have said it is understood (*contra* Rosman and Rubel, 1971, p. 11) that the term "house" is not to be taken literally. The House of Sebassa has more in common with the House of Rothschild or the House of Hanover than with any dwelling place occupied by Sebassa and his household. Those belonging to a Tsimshian "house" might occupy a single dwelling or, in the case of a powerful and populous house, incorporating several lineages, a number of dwellings.

---

[2] I have not attempted to provide a consistent orthography for the Tsimshian terms used in this study but instead have given the form used by each author or, in some cases, each source of each author.

To this point, we have found that the term "Sebassa" can refer to several different social entities: an individual who holds that chiefly name; his lineage; the "house" or maximal lineage to which that lineage belongs; and, after the practice of the fur traders, the Kitkatla people as a whole. All of these extensions of the personal name reflect the fact that Sebassa was the leading person in a lineage that was the dominant subdivision of a house that was in turn the highest-ranking division of the Kitkatla.

Besides identifying the Kitkatla by the name of their ranking chief, the fur-traders added yet another extension of the term. As Niblack (1890) long ago pointed out, traders frequently named a village after the chief—that is, after the highest ranking individual there. Thus the Haida village of "Hyo-hai-ka" was known as Skidegate (1890, p. 310) and the Kitkatla village at Port Carnaveral was referred to as Sebassas or Port Shebasha (e.g., Green, 1915, p. 49 fn; McNeill, 1825, entries for May 2, June 17, June 19; 1933, entry for March 31; Work, 1945, pp. 36, 55, 59, 62). Even more general uses of the name are found earlier. Stephen Reynolds notes on June 17, 1812, that after leaving Skidegate, the *New Hazard* set its course "northeast towards Shebas shore" (Howay, 1970, p. 88) and Sturgis (1978, pp. 104,106) wrote in 1799 of Chebbashah River, Harbour, and Sound. That its use as a specific place name goes back some time is indicated by the list of "Principal Harbours" Captain W. H. McNeill brought with him on his first voyage to the Northwest Coast. The list, and directions for entering the harbours, were presumably compiled before his departure from Boston in 1824 and it includes Sebashes or Port Cossack (now Port Carnaveral) as the anchorage seems also to have been known (McNeill, 1825). Even earlier (1799), Sturgis made frequent references to a place called Chebbaskah (Sturgis, 1978, pp. 84-94) although this settlement was not at Port Carnaveral on Principe Channel but rather several miles up the Nass River.

These various uses of the term Sebassa give us some difficulty in deciding how the fur traders applied it. Mostly it seems to have been employed as a synonym for Kitkatla, occasionally it identifies only the person himself, and in some instances it may refer to the house, lineage, or place.

By 1835 the Kitkatla had experienced half a century of direct contact with fur traders. Captain James Colnett seems to have been the first to venture into Kitkatla territory (Moeller, 1966). For two months in the fall of 1787 his vessel, the *Prince of Wales*, lay at anchor in Calamity Bay, Banks Island, and traded with the natives. Shortly after anchoring he was visited by "Seak, Chief of the Tsimshians" (Moeller, 1966, p. 15) who is easily equated with Edward Gamble's ce·ks, the lineage name second in order after Sebassa within the House of Sebassa (Barbeau, File A VII 29b, p. 22).

The following several decades of contact seem to have had relatively little effect on the annual subsistence activities of the Kitkatla. In the 1820s and again in the 1830s we find the traders accommodating their visits to the habits of the Tsimshian, which continued to be governed by traditional seasonal moves in search of food and other resources.

The most comprehensive and earliest description of the general pattern of these annual Tsimshian moves and activities is provided by Douglas in an undated and isolated entry in the back pages of his "Diary of a Trip to the Northwest Coast," the main portion of which is attributable to 1840. Writing from the perspective of a fur trader, he produced the following summary of when the Tsimshian might be expected, in the year's course of events, to appear at Fort Simpson:

> The Chimseeans on their route from Pearl Harbour [3 miles south of the Fort], Skeena and other places south of these, to Nass River reach the Fort early in February and generally stay there until the beginning of March, when the Oolaghans enter the River, after the fishing is over they return with the fish and oil they have procured, which forms part of the ensuing winters provision, about the latter part of May, and make another sojourn at the Fort until July when they disperse, some for Skeena others go as far south as Gairdners Canal, where they are constantly employed about their Salmon fisheries during the summer, they likewise hunt and trade with the natives in the interior canals and procure quantities of Herring spawn from the people of Milbank sound [the Bella Bella], and do not visit the Fort in a body until the following February so that June and February are the only months when there are large assemblages of Indians at the Fort (Douglas, 1840, p. 118).

This pattern, reaffirmed almost a century later by details that Garfield's (1939) informants were able to recall of a more recent past, is clearly reflected in what Tolmie, Work, and the Fort Simpson Journal tell us about the Sebassa's movements in 1835. Our earliest reference to the Sebassa that year is February 1, when it is noted that "In the evening Sebassa [*and*] part of his tribe arrived" at Fort Simpson (Fort Simpson Journal 1834-38, fo. 19d). The next observations are not until the 18th of the following month when Tolmie (1963, p. 305), at Fort McLoughlin, wrote:

> Wacash [ranking chief of the Weetletoch Bella Bella] has been trading. He & a large party of his gang are going to visit Sebassa & thereafter to proceed to the Kitloah [Kitlope] River to procure oolachan oil.

The details of this entry are of interest because they lend some credence to an early suggestion by Boas (1890, p. 831) that the Kitlope were "subjects" of the chief of the Kitkatla. In this light, Wacash's visit to Sebassa becomes a kind of courtesy call before heading off to get oil from the Kitlope. On the other hand, Wacash, "the most powerful of the Bilbilla chiefs" (Tolmie, 1963, p. 272), may simply have been returning Sebassa's visit of the previous year.

Tolmie had good cause to remember the Sebassa men and their earlier appearance. For three days that first week in March of 1834 the builders of Fort McLoughlin had not ventured out to cut and square timbers so fearful were they of the visiting Sebassa, whom Tolmie (1963, p. 271) described as "a thievish & very immoral tribe, much dreaded by their neighbours, in fact the Youkiltahs of this quarter"—a reference to the Yaculta or Lekwiltok whose presence at Cape Mudge made passage through Seymour Narrows dangerous for all travellers and whose raids on the Gulf of Georgia and Fraser River villages were well known to Hudson's Bay men. A. C. Anderson, also at Fort McLoughlin in 1834, reported:

> Previous to our building here, these indians were much oppressed by Sebassa, a powerful chief of the Canal de Principe, indeed the most powerful on the Coast. This Tyrant was in the Habit of coming here for the purpose of trading Skins and Slaves, but generally, on his departure, taking a number of the latter with him by stealth. The natives not being then able to cope with them were under the necessity of submitting passively to his tyranny ... (Anderson 1834, fo. 1d).

Although Sebassa himself may have been at home to receive Wacash and his party in March of 1835, some Kitkatla were not. The Fort Simpson Journal (fos. 24, 24d) records that on the evening of March 22, "2 small canoes 8 Indians arrived from Sebassa on their way to Nass" and notes the departure of these "Sebassa Indians" the following morning. That day, Work (1945, p. 29), who was aboard the Hudson's Bay Company brig *Lama* at the Nass estuary, heralded the arrival of the eulachon and, late that night, of a party of "Sebassa men" who passed by after pausing briefly to speak with those on the vessel.

The canoe trip cannot have been a pleasant one. For the four days preceding there had been rain, snow, hail, and stormy weather and the day of their arrival had seen sleet, drizzling rain, and squalls. Where they were headed, Work does not tell us. Sturgis (1978, pp. 84-94), as we have seen, located "Chebbaskah" several miles up the Nass, and Beynon (Barbeau, File A VII 29e, ii) also puts a Kitkatla village well up the Nass River near the mouth of a small tributary, Tseax River. There is an obvious similarity between the name for this river (rendered "Se-aks" in the 1882 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs)and "ce·ks", the name for the second ranking sub-division of the House of Sebassa (Barbeau, File A VII 29b, p. 22). Whatever their destination, they were back at Fort Simpson by the evening of April 3rd along with "about 1 Tierce [a 42 gallon cask] of small Fish which were traded" (Fort Simpson Journal 1834-38, fo. 25d) and as soon as they were finished with business, they started for Sebassa.

When these Sebassa men contacted the *Lama* at Nass, Work learned that the Kitkatla had some furs back at home and the vessel was soon under weigh south to see if they could be traded. Light winds hampered the *Lama* the day of departure (March 25) but soon there was more than enough wind, unfortunately from the wrong quarter. It was not until April 9, two full weeks later, that they finally came to anchor in Kitkatla territory, at Seal Harbour on the northeast coast of the Estevan Islands.

> Thursday, April 9 ... This place, Seal Harbour, is where we expected to find the Sebassa Indians but not one is to be seen. ... It is conjectured that they are on the opposite side of the island [Banks Island; Work seems not to have known that Banks and the Estevan Group were separate] and may visit us tomorrow. We fired two gun shots when we anchored to appraise the Natives that we were here (Work, 1945, p. 33).

The natives seem to have heard and understood, for that night two canoeloads came alongside to find out what ship was there and the next day desultory trading began.

> We also got a good deal of fish & deer from them & some geese and ducks. From these people we learn that they are scattered about in small parties, that the greater number are [on] the opposite side of the island at Skidoon harbour, about 30 miles distant. The Chief Sabassas has been off some time with a party on a visit to the Fort at Millbank and probably they have taken a good many of the furs they had with them (Work, 1945, p. 33).[3]

This was, indeed, a correct surmise. While the *Lama* was still fighting hard winds off the mouth of the Skeena, Sebassa was journeying south. He reached Fort McLoughlin on April 3rd in company with his brother, "Nishwayachts." Tolmie (1963, p. 307) comments that they are said to have an abundance of beaver and that Sebassa has been lately at Fort Simpson. "Nishwayachts" is a name that turns up again in Barbeau's notes (File A VII 29b, p. 22) as "nisɬkwaxs," the sixth and probably lowest ranking sub-division of the House of Sebassa.

A few days later there is a murder at the village of the Owieletoch Bella Bella and the next day,

---

[3] The location of Skidoon Harbour, or Skedansk as McNeill (1825) rendered it, cannot yet be determined with certainty. The best candidate is what is presently marked on the charts as Foul Bay—a marine feature also known as Indian Harbour (Walker, n.d., p. 30).

> *Wednesday, April 8:* Sebassa & his brother traded 13 large beaver. Not a canoe appeared today from Boston's village [the Owieletoch settlement]. Sebassa seems uneasy and anxious to be off. Last night when the Bilbilla canoes were leaving the beach, he had three or four armed sentinels placed in different stations around his house to show his watchfulness (Tolmie, 1963, p. 307).

Whatever occasioned this vigilance it seems not to have been caused by direct involvement in the murder. Tolmie (1963, p. 308) later identifies the killer as a Bella Bella and the motive as revenge for having caused a death by working magic. Sebassa's evident unease may signify his appreciation that with his reputation he would be suspect until the true slayer was known.

We lose track of Sebassa at this time. Presumably he shortly left Milbank because Tolmie makes no further reference to him and, as an individual, Sebassa is not again identifiable until some months later when he is mentioned in connection with a disturbance at Fort Simpson.

The dispersed and varied subsistence activities of the Kitkatla, however, continued to be reported by Work as he sat at Seal Harbour aboard the *Lama*. Fish, wildfowl, and a deer were traded April 12 and then the next day,

> Some Indians proposed being paid for going to Skidoon Harbour for a part of the tribe which are there, but we declined their offer as it was uncertain when they might arrive and we did not like to lose so much time as would probably be required to wait for them. . . . They are now scattered about in small parties and might take a considerable time to collect (Work, 1945, p. 34).

The trading party had evidently made up their minds to leave and this they did early the following morning, but not before trading some fresh halibut. Twelve days later (April 25) Tolmie (1963, p. 309) notes that the Bella Bella, too, have gone to their halibut station.

At Nawitti, the *Lama*'s next anchorage, the Hudson's Bay Company group met Captain Allen and the American trading vessel *Europa*. He had just come from "Sebasses" (the place) and spoke of having obtained few furs at that location.

Work did not return to the Kitkatla that year but shortly after the first of June, not long following the return to Fort Simpson, the *Lama*, the *Europa*, and a second American vessel, the *Bolivar*, were back at "Sebasses" trading furs (Work, 1945, pp. 54-55). Their stay must have been about two weeks for by June 19 the same craft were at anchor a few miles from Fort McLoughlin (Tolmie, 1963, p. 312).

About the same time the three vessels put into "Sebasses," Tolmie (1963, p. 311) made the following entry:

> *Tuesday, June 2:* . . . Visited by two canoes of Kitchaatla or Sebassa men, who presented skins of a recently killed Sea Otter & Beaver & traded the latter. After a short stay during which they seemed distrustful of the intentions of the natives & had their weapons in readiness, they set out to rejoin a party of their countrymen who are hunting the Sea Otter at Yulath, a group of rocky islets to the Westward—their paddles were painted black a practice adopted by all the N.W. tribes when desirous to travel unobserved.

Yulath, or the Goose Islands (Yā'laLē', Boas, 1932, p. 24), are not otherwise known to have belonged to the Kitkatla or to have been used by them. Those islands were the summer home of a Bella Bella local group—the YālaLe·ĭdEx^{u} (Boas,1932,p.36) yalakai꞉idox(Olson,1955). According to Olson, the *Yalakai꞉idox*, along with several other of the "outside people," moved in to join the Owieletoch and form part of that group. Possibly their virtual abandonment of Yulath had taken place by 1835 and it even seems likely the Kitkatla's wish to use it as a base for the lucrative sea otter hunt played some part in bringing about the move.

All during the first weeks of June, canoes were returning from the Nass fishery, some 850 of them between the 4th and 18 of the month (Work, 1945, p. 53). According to Work (1945, p. 43) it had been an "indifferent fishing year" with eulachon oil so scarce and prices so high that there was no encouragement for the Company to purchase any for trade. After a brief stay at Fort Simpson, "the chiefs went off accompanied by most of their people to Pearl Harbour, and are to proceed shortly to Millbank" (Work, 1945, p. 53).

Their arrival at Milbank some two weeks later found the Bella Bella in a state of considerable unease. As Tolmie explained on June 25:

> The tranquility here has been interrupted by the visit of a band of Sebassa Marauders. They set out with the intention of attacking the Billichoola & Estetuch but finding these tribes prepared for their attack, they bent their course to the Southward & mee[t]ing in Fisher's Canal (I suppose with some canoes of Quashilla [Goasila of Smith Sound] bound for Nawitie)—they invited to land and eat with them. All the canoes but one obeyed the invitation but the owner of the latter suspicious of treachery landed on a rocky islet within gunshot of the point. The Kitchaatlah intermingling with their guests drew their knives at a given signal & began the attack. The Quashilla being poorly armed fled but three of their number were killed & three women captured. The possessor of the rocky islet fired repeatedly on the Kitchaatlah & shot two (Tolmie, 1963, pp. 312-313).

Tolmie's (1963, p. 314) reference on July 3rd to reports "that some Indians who had gone to the Sward [southward] had been slain by the Sebassa men, their women & children taken captive" possibly refers to the same event although it is odd that Tolmie should seem so quickly to have forgotten his earlier, fairly detailed entry. This second set of killings appears also to involve the deaths of Bella Bella as the news brought forth "a mournful lament for the supposed sufferers—the burthen of the song is frequently interrupted by screams & sobbing" (Tolmie, 1963 p. 314).

At dawn on the 3rd, before the report of the slayings was received, the village near Fort McLoughlin was greatly disturbed by the rumoured presence of Haida raiders in the area. By mid-morning, however, it had been determined that the visitors were Tsimshian rather than Haida and that they were "peacably employed at Wacash's village [the Weetletoch settlement], blowing down [eagle down] on the Haeeltzuk chiefs head & drinking rum" (Tolmie, 1963, p. 313). It was, in fact, the Tsimshian party whose departure Work had anticipated a few weeks earlier.

There were 17 canoeloads of visitors headed by Legeich, the ranking Fort Simpson chief. Their stay was peaceful but clearly not entirely a social call:

> *Saturday, July 4.* Ligeich & a number of his people passed the day here causing a great stir. The Chimmesyan canoes lay in a row in front of the village & owing to the traffic carried on in Earshells Oolaghans &c. there was as much noise & din almost as at a country fair at home (Tolmie, 1963, p. 314).

That evening, Legeich and his party left and things at Milbank and Fort Simpson are tranquil for a while as salmon fishing goes into full swing. Through July, Work (1945) reports the Indians at the Nass River, Observatory Inlet, and the Skeena. Occasionally they bring fresh salmon to the traders but there are days and even longer periods when no Indians at all come to the Fort. Once, in mid-July, a Sebassa accompanies Indians visiting the Fort from the Skeena fishery (Work, 1945, p. 58). About the same time (July 13) "a small canoe arrived from Sebassa with 6 Land Fur," returning the next day (Fort Simpson Journal 1834-35, fos. 35, 35d) and again on July 20 "a canoe arrived from the neighberhood of Sebassa with 18 or 20 Land Fur (Fort Simpson Journal 1834-38, fos. 35d, 36).

Apart from these brief remarks we have no direct indication of how or where the Kitkatla were employed during the summer months. Although some were engaged in hunting fur-bearing animals, it can be assumed that in common with their neighbours, most spent the summer fishing salmon and that they did so at various locations within their home region and possibly on the Skeena as well.

Edward Gamble (Barbeau, File A VII 29e, i) has provided us with a sketch map of Sebassa's territory indicating that he held Lowe Inlet (k`mɔ·də) and the lakes and rivers in its watershed. As the map details features that would be of particular interest to river fishermen and as it specifically identifies the area where coho spawn, it seems reasonable to conclude this was at least one of Sebassa's salmon fisheries—perhaps his only one. If Sebassa retired to this location for the summer, it is not surprising that Tolmie and Work do not make mention of his activities. Lowe Inlet is situated off Grenville Channel, deep within the islands that were the home of the Kitkatla and well-removed from the open water route used by traders in the age of sail.

Sebassa's name next appears in the journals in early August and once again it is linked with trouble.

> Sunday, August 9. It is reported among the Indians that Capt. Allan [of the *Europa*] had a quarrel with the Sabasses Indians some time ago in consequence of some thefts they committed upon him, and that in retaliation he seized two of their men and 15 beaver and carried them off Northward with him, and that Sebasses is threatening to retaliate upon us, and carry off some of our people if he finds an opportunity for that (Work, 1945, p. 63).

The opportunity seems to have presented itself at the end of the month. Sebassa and two canoes arrived at Fort Simpson on Sunday evening, August 30, and the next night,

> ... the door keeper turned out a Sabassa Indian, who remained outside the gate sulky, and shortly after, when one of the men Lapierre went out, he attacked him without any provocation, some other Indians of the same tribe and one of the Sabasses wives joined to assist him. Some of the Islanders [Hawaiians] were bye and aided Lapierre. One of the Indians got a cutting blow on the face, and I believe the woman also got a blow which exasperated the Indians, and though they threatened to have recourse to their knives and arms [entry incomplete] (Work, 1945, p. 73).

Although two more canoes of Kitkatla arrived that night, Sebassa decided to withdraw. He and two canoes left the next morning (Work, 1945, p. 73)—the Fort Simpson Journal (1834-38, fo. 39) records the departure of "Sebassa & part of gang"—and reference to this event is, in fact, the last entry any of our sources provided for Sebassa in 1835. There are, however, two further references to the Sebassa in the Fort Simpson Journal (1834-38, fos. 45d, 47). On November 14, a single canoe arrived at the Fort with "6 deer and 4 or 5 Land Furs," and again on December 2, a lone Sebassa canoe brought "about a Dozen skins."

We can summarize what has been learned about the movements and activities of the Kitkatla and their ranking chief during 1835.

Kitkatla:—From the latter part of March through early June some of the Kitkatla or Sebassa were at the Nass River trading or fishing for eulachon. Others were in the home territory—some at the winter village site and, at least by mid-April, more are scattered through the islands south of the Skeena and on the outer coast of Banks Island hunting birds and deer and fishing halibut. By late May or early June some have moved to Yulath (the Goose Islands) to hunt sea otter and some, perhaps from the same party, roam the Bella Bella territory as raiders in late June and early July.

Our record is unfortunately silent on salmon-fishing activities of the Kitkatla although these must have been the dominant concern of the late summer and early fall months. During the same period, some were hunting and trading furs.

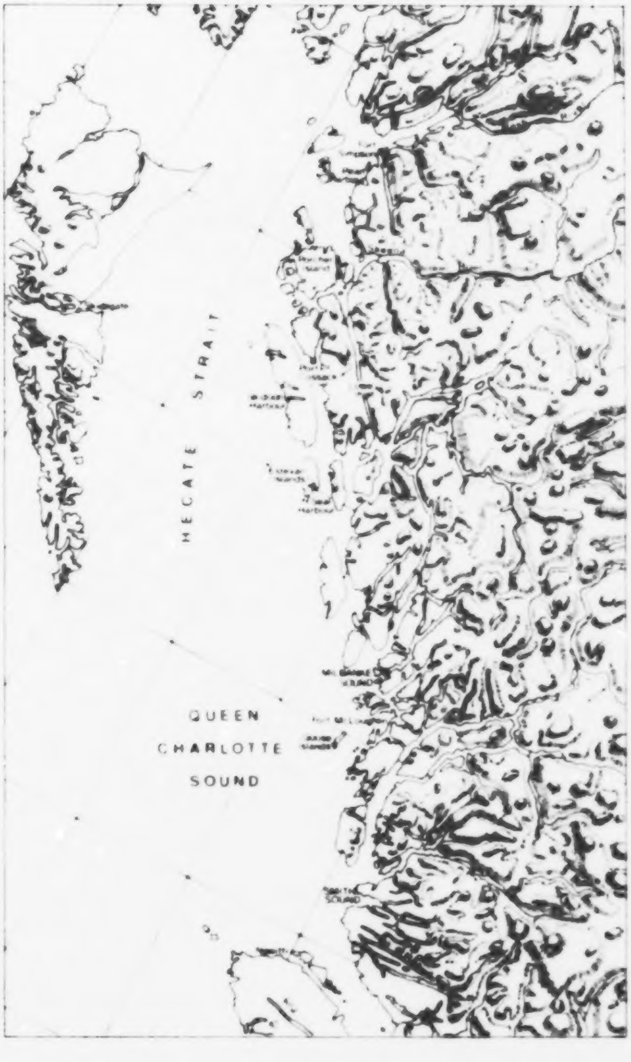
Sebassa:—At the beginning of February, Sebassa visited Fort Simpson. Shortly after mid-March, he would have been somewhere in his territory hosting Wacash of the Bella Bella. Between April 3 and 9 he and a brother were at Milbank Sound calling on the Bella Bella. At the end of August he attempts to avenge Capt. Allan's abduction of two of his people and seizure of 15 pelts by causing trouble at Fort Simpson.

My stated purpose in undertaking this study was to reconstruct the movements and pursuits of a Northwest Coast people during the course of a single year. This exercise in doing ethnohistory has had one predictable outcome: the final picture is incomplete; but though the results are imperfect, we have been furnished with data that can eventually contribute to a fuller description of the Kitkatla round of activity.

Some characteristics of that prospective description may be anticipated. In broad outline, it will probably be not too different from that sketched by Douglas for the Fort Simpson Tsimshian: leaving the home territory in February or March to fish eulachon at the Nass until sometime in May, fishing salmon in summer and early fall and returning to the main village for winter. Information reported above makes clear that for the Kitkatla each seasonal move involved only a portion of the group. While some caught and processed eulachon at the Nass, others were fishing halibut on the west side of Banks Island or hunting deer and birds in the adjacent islands, and still others seem to have remained in the winter village on McCauley Island.

An interesting by-product of this ethnohistoric search has been the discovery that Sebassa, the ranking chief of the Kitkatla, appears to have been largely removed from the tasks that occupied the majority of the people. Those glimpses we have of his year find him playing host to a visiting chief, in turn visiting and trading with the Bella Bella, trading with Europeans and seeking revenge for wrong done him or his group by a trader.

We do not know that Sebassa did not engage in subsistence pursuits along with his fellow Kitkatla, but what we do learn of his actions in 1835 serves to set him apart from that kind of activity. He seems instead to be concerned with the kinds of things we properly associate with a chief—using the term now in the accepted anthropological sense as the head of a chiefdom.



Map showing locations mentioned in the text.

This is not meant to suggest that the Kitkatla were organized as a chiefdom. There is ample evidence to the contrary for Northwest Coast societies in general and the Tsimshian in particular. The Reverend Jonathan S. Green, for example, at the Nass and among the Kitkatla in 1829, is quite explicit on that point: "To every tribe there are several chiefs, but their authority is rather nominal than real" (Green, 1915, p. 45) and he writes of "Shebasha, a chief of a tribe of that name" (1915, p. 44). But I think that whatever was the situation before, we can agree that by the mid-1830s he was more than just "a chief" of Kitkatla. In common with a few other individuals, as, for example, Legeich of the Gispaxloats and Shakes of the Stikine, each bearing the highest ranking name of their respective groups, Sebassa had become a very powerful person.

Duff, (1964, p. 58) has suggested that some Tlingit and Tsimshian headmen achieved unusual influence and power through fortunate placement in the fur trade. Sebassa's prominence may have been so derived. The Kitkatla were geographically well situated for the sea otter hunt and there is evidence offered above that they expanded their territory by taking a sea otter hunting base from the Bella Bella. In addition, the Sebassa, acting as middlemen, apparently obtained furs from the Kitamat (Simpson, 1831-32, fo. 81). It is also clear that Sebassa, Shakes, and Legeich were important figures in the slave trade but whether such activity was a basis or a result of their strength is not possible to say. At this time, from the perspective of a single reconstructed year, we can only speculate on the sources of Sebassa's power but as the picture is gradually filled in for other years we may be encouraged to move beyond conjecture.

Bibliography

Adams, John W. (1973). *The Gitksan Potlatch: Population Flux, Resource Ownership and Reciprocity*. Holt, Rinehart, Toronto.

Anderson, Alexander C. (1834). Report on Milbank Sound on the Northwest Coast of America. MS B120/e/1. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Barbeau, Marius. (File A VII 20b). MS. Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, The National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada. Ottawa.

Barbeau, Marius. (File A VII 29e, i). MS. Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, The National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada. Ottawa.

Barbeau, Marius. (File A VII 29e, ii). MS. Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, The National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada, Ottawa.

Barbeau, Marius (1950). Totem Poles. Vol. 2. *National Museum of Canada*, Bull. 119. Ottawa.

Beynon, William (1953). Kitkatla Series. MS. Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, The National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada. Ottawa.

Boas, Franz (1890). First general report on the Indians of British Columbia. Fifth report on the north-western tribes of Canada, 1889. *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1889, pp. 801-900. London.

Boas, Franz (1916). Tsimshian mythology. *Thirty-first Annual Report. Bureau of America Ethnology*, pp. 27-1037. Washington.

Boas, Franz (1932). Bella Bella Tales. *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, 25. New York.

Canada, Department of Indian Affairs (1882). *Annual Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs*. Ottawa.

Douglas, Sir James (1840). Diary of a Trip to the Northwest Coast. MS. Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Victoria.

Duff, Wilson (1964). The impact of the white man. The Indian history of British Columbia, Vol. 1. *Anthropology in British Columbia. Memoir 5*. Victoria.

Dunn, John (1844). *History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade: with an account of the habits and customs of the principal native tribes on the northern continent*. Edwards and Hughes, London.

Fort Simpson Journal 1834-1838. MS. B201/a/3. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Garfield, Viola (1939). Tsimshian clan and society. *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, 7*. Seattle.

Garfield, Viola (1951). The Tsimshian: their arts and music. *Publications of the American Ethnological Society*. New York.

Green, Jonathan S. (1915). *Journal of a Tour on the Northwest Coast of America in The Year 1829*. Heartman, New York.

Howay, Frederick W. (ed.) (1970). *The Voyage of the New Hazard to the Northwest Coast, Hawaii and China, 1810-1813, by Stephen Reynolds, a member of the Crew*. Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington.

McNeill, William H. (1825). Journal of a Voyage kept on board the Brig *Convoy*. MS. Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Victoria.

Moeller, Beverley B. (1966). Captain James Colnett and the Tsimshian Indians, 1787. *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*,57:13-17.

Niblack, Albert P. (1890). The coast Indians of Southern Alaska and northern British Columbia. *U.S. National Museum Report for the Year Ending June 30, 1888*, pp. 225-386. Washington.

Olson, Ronald L. (1955). Notes on the Bella Bella Kwakiutl. *Anthropological Records*, 14,5, pp. 319-348. Berkeley.

Rosman, Abraham, and Paula G. Rubel (1971). *Feasting with Mine Enemy: rank and exchange among northwest coast societies*. Columbia, New York.

Simpson, Amileus (1831-32). Log of *Dryad*. MS C1/218. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba. Winnipeg.

Sturgis, William (1978). *The Journal of William Sturgis*, edited by S. W. Jackman. Sono Nis Press, Victoria.

Tolmie, William Fraser (1963). *The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie: Physician and Fur Trader*. Mitchell Press, Vancouver.

Walker, C. E. (ed.) (n.d.). Untitled booklet listing salmon spawning streams in British Columbia. Resource Development Branch, Fisheries and Environment Canada. Vancouver.

Work, John (1945). The Journal of John Work, January to October 1835. *Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Memoir 10*. Victoria.

THINGS

Wilson Duff (1925-1976): His Contributions to the Growth of Archaeology in British Columbia

Charles E. Borden
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Reprinted from *BC Studies*
No. 33; Spring 1977

The death of Wilson Duff on 8 August 1976 at the age of 51 has deprived the native peoples of the Pacific Northwest of one of their true and most actively helpful non-Indian friends. The respect and affection which they felt for Wilson Duff became touchingly evident to all those who attended the simple memorial ceremony in the new University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology. On this occasion, Indian representatives from the coast and the interior rose successively to pay tribute and to express their grief in eloquent words at the passing of "this good man."

Wilson Duff will be missed no less by his academic colleagues and other friends in British Columbia and elsewhere, and by the many students he taught at the University of British Columbia about Indian life and culture and the native peoples' present problems and aspirations. They mourn in his passing the loss of an inspiring teacher and of a scholar who delved beneath the surface appearance of things to search for the less obvious deeper meanings.

My personal sense of loss is especially deep because his tragic death terminates a long friendship and close co-operation on behalf of archaeology in British Columbia which began more than a quarter of a century ago. Since Dr. Michael Ames has recently published a very perceptive review of Wilson Duff's contributions to Northwest Coast Ethnology and Art (*BC Studies* 31:3-11; this vol: 17-21) the present article will dwell mainly on Duff's contributions to the growth of archaeology in this province.

When Dr. Harry B. Hawthorn joined the University of British Columbia faculty in 1947 (the first anthropologist to be appointed to a university post in western Canada!) he observed with approval the program of rescue excavations which Dr. Philip Akrigg and I had started in 1945 in an effort to salvage as much information as possible from the rapidly vanishing archaeological sites in the city of Vancouver. In 1948, one year after his arrival, Dr. Hawthorn asked me to organize and direct a small-scale archaeological teaching project as part of his course on the Indians of British Columbia (Anthropology 401). Included in the project were lectures and field work at the Marpole site, followed by laboratory analysis and the preparation of a report by each student. Naturally, success of this trial venture depended in large measure on the quality of the students who were to take part. As it turned out, they were the usual mix, ranging from very good to poor. Fortunately, one of the participants was a brilliant 23-year-old war veteran who had served as navigator in the Royal Canadian Air Force: Wilson Duff. The project quickly revealed his exceptional ability and character traits. Wilson's enthusiasm and cheering sense of humour even under adverse weather conditions, his perceptiveness, diligence, and versatility, his meticulous attention to detail, and not the least his willingness to help others and to serve beyond the call of duty were important factors in assuring the success of this trial project. As a direct consequence of this favourable outcome, Dr. Hawthorn recommended that the University of British Columbia offer, beginning in the fall of 1949, a one-year course in the Archaeology of British Columbia (Anthropology 420), a course which, combining theory, method, and practice, has been presented on a regular basis ever since.

After obtaining a B.A. degree from University of British Columbia in the spring of 1949 Wilson Duff embarked without a break on a program of graduate studies in Anthropology at the University of Washington. Here, Dr. Erna Gunther, then head of the Department of Anthropology, had added archaeological studies to the curriculum in 1946, including an annual summer field school. Thus in the summer of 1949 Wilson, now a graduate student, joined the archaeological field-school project at the Whalen Farm site in the southwestern part of the Fraser delta. As director of this field-school, I was again fortunate in having Wilson as a stalwart participant in this my first large-scale teaching project. The same meritorious qualities which he had revealed at Marpole were again important in contributing to the success of this archaeological training school.

While the Whalen Farm project was in operation Wilson managed to slip away every weekend to visit Indian communities along the lower Fraser to gather ethnographic data on these riverine people. This research, which was continued later under the guidance of Dr. Gunther, formed the basis for Wilson Duff's M.A. thesis. He was awarded the Master's degree in anthropology in 1951. Even prior to this, Wilson had been appointed Curator of Anthropology at the British Columbia Provincial Museum, a position he held from 1950 to 1965.

Ever since my earliest teaching of archaeology I had stressed to my students that the cultural remains which lie buried in the ancient sites of British Columbia are part of the cultural heritage of all mankind, and that it is our duty not to let these non-renewable resources go to waste through apathy and negligence. Our province is indeed fortunate that Wilson took this message seriously because it became the basis for many years of fruitful co-operation during which we evolved the procedures that made possible a sound and orderly development of archaeological research in British Columbia.

In his capacity as a civil servant in Victoria, Wilson learned of government plans for industrial development long before public announcements were made. Such foreknowledge made possible timely co-operative planning when proposed projects threatened the obliteration of potentially important archaeological remains. Thus Wilson informed me late in 1950 of the then Liberal government's intention to grant the Aluminum Company of Canada a licence to construct a dam in the gorge of the Nechako River for the creation of a huge power reservoir in Tweedsmuir Park for the Aluminum Company's Kemano-Kitimat project. The backed-up water would flood more that 400 miles of archaeologically unexplored lake and river margins. Hence, when the Alcan project was finally announced Wilson and I were ready with a joint brief to the British Columbia government.

The brief pointed out (1) the potential threat to archaeological remains, (2) the consequent urgent need for an archaeological site survey to be carried out in the summer of 1951, and (3) the likely need for salvage excavations in the following summer. To our satisfaction, the government responded favourably with a grant of $2,000 for the survey in 1951. Although wholly inadequate, the funds enabled Alan Bryan (now Professor of Anthropology, University of Alberta) and myself to conduct a hazardous reconnaissance in the course of which we located 130 sites, the majority and most important of these being in the eastern part of Tweedsmuir Park. The results were presented to the British Columbia government in a comprehensive report. Once again, Wilson and I joined forces and worked out a detailed proposal for follow-up rescue excavations in 1952, and once again the government responded favourably and granted all of the requested funds of somewhat more than $8,000. We also sought support from the Aluminum Company of Canada, and they too eventually contributed an additional $5,000. These funds made it possible to mount the first large-scale archaeological rescue operation in the north-central interior of British Columbia. Although severely limited in time (the excavated sites were drowned by the rising waters of the reservoir shortly after our enforced departure in September 1952) our project produced data which still figure prominently in the gradually emerging culture history of northern interior British Columbia.

Aside from the scientific results obtained, the co-operation of Wilson and myself set a number of precedents and established several important points:

(1) Archaeologists must be given sufficient lead-time to plan:
  (a) adequate regional site surveys in threatened areas, and subsequently
  (b) problem-oriented investigations at selected key sites.

(2) Whenever the provincial government is involved in industrial and similar developments it has the moral obligation to provide funds for surveys to assess the archaeological resources in the affected areas and, if necessary, for follow-up salvage operations.

(3) Private companies are similarly obligated.

Apparent also was the growing need for legislation to protect British Columbia's archaeological remains and for some kind of government agency to assume the responsibility of managing these resources. Throughout the 1950s Wilson and I gave numerous public lectures to service clubs and other organizations as well as over the radio, hammering away at these themes. The newspapers co-operated by frequently reporting on this campaign.

Wilson took other significant steps. Among his first acts as Curator of Anthropology at the Provincial Museum was to start publication of the important series *Anthropology in British Columbia* (1950-56), of which he himself was editor. Each number was to contain an annual survey of anthropological research in progress, completed or planned, and to provide an outlet for the publication of reports and articles. The publication added greatly to the growing interest in anthropology and archaeology in the Pacific Northwest and even initiated the first archaeological controversy in this area. It is a pity that financial constraints compelled its termination after seven years. Among the publications in this series were several of Duff's own contributions, one of the most important being "The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, B.C." (1952), a revised version of his Master's thesis. Aside from detailed ethnographic data, the work also incorporated the results of archaeological surveys along the lower Fraser, in the course of which Wilson relocated many sites that had been abandoned in protohistoric and historic times.

Although Wilson never carried out full-scale excavations himself he always maintained a keen interest in the results of such projects. Moreover, he had a sharp eye for unusual artifacts and their significance. Thus he spotted in an archaeological surface collection from the East Kootenays a Scottsbluff-Eden projectile point, the first Paleo-Indian find from British Columbia (Duff and Borden, 1953). He also was ever fascinated by the more unique products of prehistoric craftsmen and artists. This interest is reflected in such articles as "An Unusual Burial at the Whalen Site" (1956*a*), "Unique Stone Artifacts from the Gulf Islands" (1956*b*), and "Stone Clubs from the Upper Skeena River" (1963). This fascination with ancient Indian art is especially shown in "Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser Valley and Gulf of Georgia" (1956*c*), one of Duff's major contributions, and a study which presages his last important work, the penetrating interpretative essay in the catalogue which accompanied the stunning exhibition "Images Stone B.C. Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture" (1975).

During the 1950s vandalism by amateurs continued. It was even still possible for amateurs and indeed for professional archaeologists from across the border to invade British Columbia and without so much as "by your leave" engage in their nefarious activities and then return with their pilfered loot. But worse yet was the continuing large-scale destruction of uninvestigated ancient sites through industrial development, road construction, power reservoirs, urban expansion, farming, the lumber industry, and so on. However, gradually the sustained public campaign by Wilson and myself for legislation to protect British Columbia's archaeological resources, combined with growing public pressure, was beginning to have its impact on the politicians in Victoria of that time. A measure of the wide interest which this campaign generated is the fact that reports of it appeared in newspapers across the nation and elsewhere, including the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Times*. As a result, in 1959, after consulting with me, Wilson was able to sit down with the legal advisors of the provincial government and work out the draft of British Columbia's first *Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act*, which was passed by the British Columbia Legislature in 1960.

Among the main provisions of this Act was that it prohibited the disturbance of any archaeological site located on Crown land without a duly authorized *Permit* by the Minister in charge of the administration of the Act. Contravention of any provision of the Act could upon conviction result in a fine of up to $500 or imprisonment for six months or both. There was, furthermore, a rather weak provision indicating that "a person" undertaking commercial, industrial or other activity that would threaten destruction of archaeological or historic sites might be requested by the Minister "to provide for adequate investigation, recording, and salvage of archaeological or historic objects." A major weakness of this provision was that it applied only to *known* sites and thus did not provide for surveys in archaeologically unexplored areas prior to the start of potentially destructive activities.

Finally, the Act also made provision for the establishment by the Lieutenant-Govenor-in-Council of an Archaeological Sites Advisory Board (ASAB) charged with advising the Minister on all matters pertaining to the Act. The membership of the board was to comprise the Director of the Provincial Museum or his representative (Wilson Duff), the Provincial Archivist (W. E. Ireland), and "a representative from the appropriate department of the University of British Columbia" (C. E. Borden). Also included was the Deputy Provincial Secretary (L. J. Wallace). Soon it seemed advisable to add two others: R. Lane, Victoria, and A. C. Milliken of Yale, both representative of the lay public. Wilson Duff acted as the first Chairman of ASAB from 1960 to 1966, when he resigned from the chairmanship although he continued as an active member of the board until his death. In 1965 Duff accepted an appointment as Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Promotion to Full Professor followed in 1971.

In order to call public attention to the Archaeological Sites Protection Act and to explain its purpose and the operation of the Archaeological Sites Advisory Board, Duff in collaboration with colleagues prepared a brochure entitled "Preserving British Columbia's Prehistory" (1961). Recalling an earlier statement that "the surest guarantee for the preservation of monuments and works of the past rests in the respect and affection felt for them by the people themselves" (UNESCO, 1956), Wilson wrote in the introduction to the brochure:

> Now is the time to set the ground rules for the proper conservation of our archaeological heritage, and it was for that purpose that the present brochure was prepared. Our aim is broader than just to explain the workings of the new Act.... What is just as important is the education of the people themselves to the satisfaction they may derive from contemplating and cherishing the records left behind by the other people who lived in their localities through all the past centuries.

The cover of the brochure bore the reproduction of a photograph taken by Wilson Duff in 1949 of work in progress during the archaeological field-school project at the Whalen Farm site.

The permit system specified by the Act and establishment of ASAB made it possible to exert a considerable measure of control over the rapidly expanding archaeological research activities in the province and to curb some of the abuses that had been common earlier. But archaeological atrocities were still being committed, government departments and Crown corporations being among the worst offenders.

The revised Act of 1972 corrected certain of these weaknesses, and the appointment in the same year of a full-time Provincial Archaeologist (B. O. Simonsen) made possible a stricter enforcement of its provisions. Thanks also to the generous co-operation of the provincial government, the budget available to ASAB was greatly increased and in addition augmented by funds from various government departments and Crown corporations whenever their activities threatened to obliterate archaeological resources. As a result the Provincial Archaeologist was able to expand his staff and to exercise ASAB's responsibilities more effectively. The province was divided into several large areas, and each ASAB staff archaeologist was made responsible for overseeing one of these areas. Site surveys, started earlier to make as complete an inventory of archaeological resources as possible, were continued. It is a large undertaking and still far from complete. Although many regions have not even been touched the inventory now approaches a total of 10,000 sites in British Columbia. Foreknowledge of what kind of archaeological resources are present in various localities facilitates the organizing of problem-oriented projects whenever this becomes necessary and the estimating of funds required to carry them out.

Over the years, the membership of ASAB was considerably increased. The addition of R. Sutherland (Archaeological Society of British Columbia) reflected the public sector's growing concern in the province's cultural heritage. D. H. Mitchell was appointed as the representative from the University of Victoria, and after Simon Fraser University opened its gates R. L. Carlson became the delegate of that institution. When Duff joined the University of British Columbia faculty D. Abbott took over as representative of the Provincial Museum, and in 1967, after Wilson's resignation from the chair, C. E. Borden was appointed chairman of the board. A most significant development was the appointment to ASAB of two delegates, Della Kew and Ardyth Cooper, who represent the interests of British Columbia Indians. The native peoples were becoming increasingly concerned with the activities of those who were delving into their cultural past and who were recovering artifacts and other data over which they wished to have some control.

Wilson Duff continued to attend ASAB meetings, where his wise counsel was often decisive in reaching important decisions. On his extended travels through British Columbia Wilson had gained the confidence of many Indian groups. One important result was his recording, editing and publishing as a Memoir in the *Anthropology in British Columbia* series of the "Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool" (1959).

Wilson also became increasingly concerned with ethics in anthropological field work by ethnologists, linguists, and archaeologists and in 1969, on the occasion of the 22nd Annual Northwest Anthropological Conference, he arranged a symposium on this topic. In his introductory remarks as chairman of the symposium he stressed:

> The main concern, perhaps, is that our work among [the Indians] should not do them any harm, and if possible should do them some good. We should observe the ethical responsibility to work among them only with their consent, more than that, with their informed consent, so that they understand our purpose and also the implications of the work we are doing. [*Northwest Anthropological Research Notes*, vol. 3, no. 2: 171].

The three main speakers invited by Duff to contribute to the symposium were W. Suttles on ethnology, B. Efrat on linguistics, and C. Borden on archaeology. Participants included B. Lane, L. Thompson and R. Greengo.

It was only natural that Wilson should also become deeply involved with the complex problems of Indian land claims and that he was, perhaps more than anyone, aware of the unfair and frequently dishonest ways Indians had been dealt with. Closely related to the problem of Indian land claims was the controversial motion regarding the disposition of archaeological materials recovered in the course of field work which Wilson introduced at the 18th ASAB meeting in April 1973. The motion suggests that:

> This Board advise the Minister that in its opinion all unexcavated remains in this Province should be considered as part of the aboriginal title to the lands of British Columbia, which remain unextinguished, and should henceforth be so considered for the purpose of the administration of the Act.

Although the board passed this notion after lengthy discussion, the members recognized that they could neither establish the rights of ownership nor take a position on aboriginal issues as they would be in effect advising the government on matters which would have to be established by a court of law. Nevertheless, the board adopted the policy that until the question of land claims was settled no institution or other party was entitled to claim permanent ownership of artifacts recovered in the course of archaeological investigations in the Province of British Columbia. Henceforth, they can only hold such materials in trust for whatever Indian band claims aboriginal title to the land on which particular sites are located. According to another related policy decision reached by the board under Wilson's influence, a permit to proceed with a proposed archaeological project can be granted only after written consent has been obtained from the Indian band claiming title to the land on which the site to be investigated is located.

There were many facets to Wilson Duff's life and character, and his contributions are equally numerous and varied. Michael Ames (1976) has emphasized Wilson's contributions to the growing appreciation and understanding of Northwest Coast Indian art. My concern has been to convey some notion of the significant influence Wilson has had on efforts to assure that British Columbia's archaeological resources are protected and that the growth of archaeological studies proceeds in an orderly manner, not only without harm to but for the benefit of the Indian peoples in this province. The impact of his contributions will be felt long into the future.

References

Ames, Michael M.

1976 A note on the Contributions of Wilson Duff to Northwest Coast Ethnology and Art. *BC Studies* 31:3-11. Reprinted this vol.: 17-21

Duff, Wilson

1952 The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, B.C. *Anthropology in British Columbia*. Memoir, No. 1.

1956*a* An Unusual Burial at the Whalen Site, *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, 24(1):67-72.

1956*b* Unique Stone Artifacts from the Gulf Islands. *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, Report for the year 1955*: 23-26. Victoria.

1956*c* Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser Valley and Gulf of Georgia. *Anthropology in British Columbia*: 5:15-151.

1959 Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool. *Anthropology in British Columbia*. Memoir No. 4.

1963 Stone Clubs from the Upper Skeena River, *Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, Report for the year 1962*: 27-38. Victoria.

1975 Images Stone B.C. Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture. Saanichton, B.C., Hancock House.

Duff, Wilson, editor.

1950-56 *Anthropology in British Columbia*, B.C. Provincial Museum, Victoria.

Duff, Wilson and Charles E. Borden

1953 A Scottsbluff-Eden Point from British Columbia. *Anthropology in British Columbia* 4:33-36.

Duff, Wilson and others

1961 Preserving British Columbia's Prehistory. *The Archaeological Sites Advisory Board*. Department of the Provincial Secretary, Victoria, B.C.

1969 Ethics in Anthropological Field Work. *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 3(2):171-190.

Stone Clubs from the Skeena River Area

Wilson Duff

Based on notes by Dr. C. F. Newcombe

Reprinted from the annual report of the British Columbia Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology for 1962

Among the notes and photographs which the Provincial Museum acquired with the Newcombe Collection in 1961 was a small bundle marked "Tsimshian stone batons." It contained materials which Dr. Newcombe had assembled, with the intention of publishing an article, on a remarkable series of more than thirty-five carved stone clubs found together in a cache at an old village site on the Bulkley Canyon near Hazelton in the upper Skeena area in 1898. One of the clubs was acquired by Dr. Newcombe, and has come to the Museum with the collection (Fig. 1a). Included with the notes were photographs of a smaller series of clubs in the National Museum of Canada, which had come from Metlakatla, on the coast a few miles north of the mouth of the Skeena. My purpose in this article is to carry through Dr. Newcombe's intention, though more than half a century late, of describing these clubs in print, and thereby bringing attention to a significant addition to the known styles of prehistoric stone sculpture of Western North America. As an additional postscript, I have added three more clubs from the upper Skeena area, which augment the series from the cache.

According to the notes, the cache of clubs was found by Chief Johnny Muldoe, of Hagwilget, while he was digging a post-hole for a house. They were 4 or 5 feet beneath the surface, in a cavity in the clay which was capped with a large stone. He reported his discovery to R. E. Loring, the Indian Agent in Hazelton, who informed A. W. Vowell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, who happened to be in Hazelton on a tour of inspection. Mr. Vowell persuaded Chief Muldoe to part with the clubs, and brought them to Victoria. On his request, Mr. Loring made inquiries among the older Indians for any tradition which might explain the cache. He learned that some generations before, another Gitksan tribe attacked the Gitanmaks of Hazelton and were beaten off. A Gitanmaks woman gathered up the arms and insignia of the slain and hid them in a cache. The attackers returned, reinforced by men from Kitsegukla, and killed most of the Gitanmaks, including the woman who had hidden the clubs. This battle is said to have occurred before the people of Temlaham, the traditional town on the Skeena, migrated to the coast.

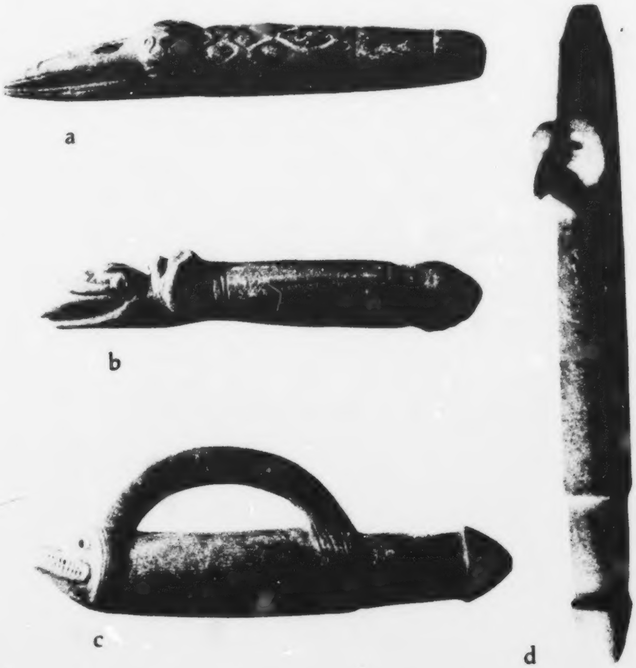


Fig. 1. Four of the sculptured stone clubs found in the cache at Hagwilget in 1898: a, No. 31 (34 cm long); b. No. 32; c, No. 33; d, No. 34. *See* text for descriptions. (From a photograph by Dr. C. F. Newcombe.)

The Indian history of that part of the Province is better known to us now than it was in 1898, although I have not seen any other reference to that battle or to the finding of the clubs. The old Hagwilget village site at the foot of the Bulkley Canyon, where the cache was found, marks the recent boundary between the Gitksan (Tsimshian-speaking) tribes of the upper Skeena and the Bulkley River Carrier. Before 1820 it was clearly within Gitksan territory, belonging to the Gitanmaks "people of the torchlight-fishing place," whose principal village was 3 miles farther down the Bulkley near its junction with the Skeena (where the present road makes a sharp turn as it enters Hazelton). In 1879 the tribe moved over to the bank of the Skeena just above Hazelton, where they still reside. A native-made bridge crossed the Bulkley at the canyon, and families of this tribe owned the fishing stations there, but whether the tribe ever made their principal village there is not known.

The Carriers, before 1820, centred their fishing activities 25 miles father up the Bulkley at the Moricetown Canyon, and the recognized boundary was at Porphyry Creek, about halfway between the two canyons. About that time a large rock-slide blocked the river and prevented the salmon from ascending, and many of the Carriers moved down and established a fishing village on the flat at the foot of the Bulkley Canyon. Its Gitksan owners, who for some reason called the newcomers "Hagwilget" (nice agreeable people), permitted them to use the site on some sort of rental basis, and they have remained ever since. Jenness has published a description and diagram of the village as it was in the closing decades of the last century (1943, p. 486), and Barbeau has described the four totem poles that stood among the smokehouses on the site in the 1920s (Barbeau, 1929). In the 1890s the people moved up to the high ground above the flat, where they still live.

The available evidence therefore indicates quite clearly that the clubs must have belonged to Gitksan Indians of late prehistoric times. It was a fortunate circumstance that they were all found together, because they show a range of types and styles which may therefore be attributed definitely to the same locality and period. Seldom is such a generous sample of prehistoric culture found in such a neat package.

Judging from Dr. Newcombe's photographs, Mr. Vowell owned a large and excellent collection of Indian artifacts from the Northwest Coast, of which the clubs formed only a part. I have not been able to learn what became of the collection. Therefore, the present location of all of the clubs except one is unknown, and, needless to say, would be of considerable interest.[1] Dr. Newcombe photographed the Vowell collection in 1899. One of his photographs (E.C. 12) shows a large number of objects, including twelve of the clubs. Another (E.C. 13) shows four more, including the one which Mr. Vowell presented to him. At the same time Dr. Newcombe made descriptive notes on thirty-four of the clubs in the series. The descriptions given below are based upon these notes, and the illustrations (Figs. 1 and 2) have been made from the photographs.

Some of the objects found in the cache are obviously weapons, having functional handles and functional striking-blades similar to those of clubs found elsewhere. However, many would be very inefficient as weapons, and although they usually have definite handles, they are sculptured into fish, bird, or other forms, which were obviously designed with something other than an effective striking-surface in mind, and which probably had some supernatural or crest significance. Dr. Newcombe was evidently reluctant to call them clubs, using the term "batons" instead. He wrote down these comments on the thirty-four which he examined:

> Nine of these are of such a shape and material as to be suitable for striking a blow on a skull or an object such as a wooden helmet without themselves suffering by the violent contact. Of the remainder some are of proper form to be weapons but are of fragile material, others are of proper material but unsuitable shape, and lastly a few are of neither suitable form nor material for rough usage in war.

I prefer to call them clubs, whether or not they may have had the additional function of displaying a crest or possessing supernatural power. Such magical stone clubs are not unknown in the traditions of the Tsimshian.

Clubs from the Cache

1 to 8. (Represented by Fig. 2a.) Eight clubs of similar shape, the largest of which is 44 cm long. The blade is wide and flat with a bluntly pointed end, like a short Roman sword, and tapers to a rounded handle, which terminates with a pointed knob. Four specimens show traces of dull red paint. All are smoothly finished, but only one (not shown) is polished.

9. (Fig. 2b.) Club, 33 cm long. The blade is decorated with eight rows of shallow longitudinal fluting on each side.

10. (Not shown.) Stone implement 57 cm long. Cylindrical, with the front third tapered to a point, and the rear quarter narrowed and flattened to a wedge-shaped point, apparently for insertion into a socket, as though it were the head of a pike.

---

[1] After this article went to press, my attention was directed to the new book *Indian Art of America*, by Frederick J. Dockstader, which illustrates two of the clubs described: No. 33 (Fig. 1c) and No. A 1 (Fig. 3a). These are now in the collection of the Museum of the American Indian, New York.

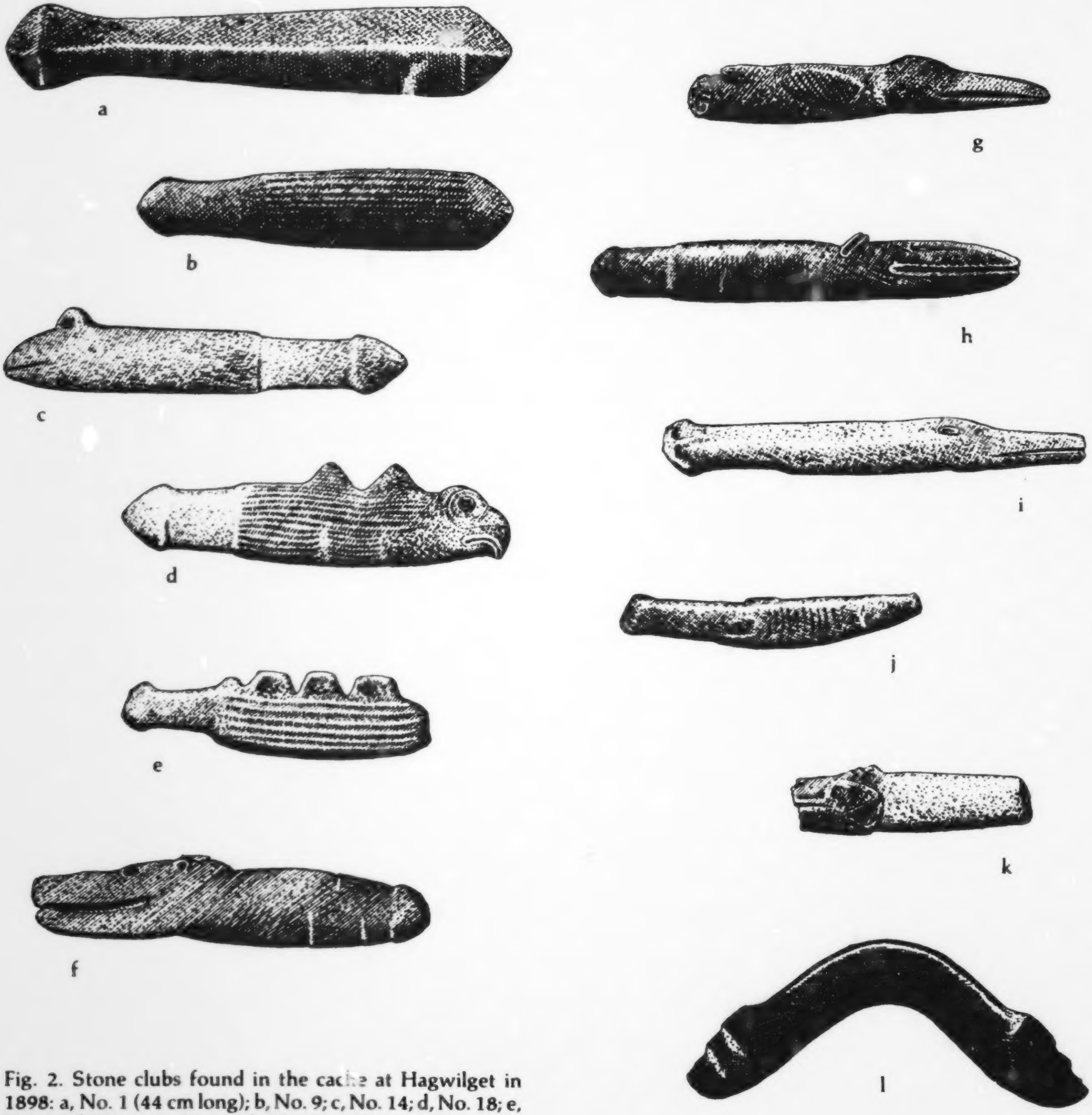


Fig. 2. Stone clubs found in the cache at Hagwilget in 1898: a, No. 1 (44 cm long); b, No. 9; c, No. 14; d, No. 18; e, No. 19; f, No. 22; g, No. 23; h, No. 24; i, No. 25; j, No. 27; k, No. 28; l, No. 30. *See* text for descriptions. (Drawn by Frank L. Beebe from a photograph by Dr. C. F. Newcombe.)

11. (Not shown.) Club, broken, but with two wolf-like ears and one side of the jaw visible. The mid third is decorated with narrow longitudinal ridges.

12. (Not shown.) Club, long and slim with a rectangular cross-section for most of its length. One end is carved in the form of a long narrow beak.

13. (Not shown.) Club, cylindrical with shallow longitudinal fluting, showing distinct traces of dull red paint. The front end is carved and forms a short, pointed beak. Eyes are indicated.

14. (Fig. 2c.) Club, 31 cm long. The body is oval in section and shaped like a fish, with a smooth finish. The front is in the form of a bluntly pointed head with an oblique mouth. Just behind the eyes is a ridge-like crest. The handle is flattened. "This specimen might have been used as a weapon."

15. (Not shown.) Club, body section ovoid. Head pointed like that of a wolf. Eyes and mouth plainly shown. On each side of the body are three rows of shallow transverse grooves; on the back there are four longitudinal grooves. Red paint shows here and there.

16. (Not shown.) Club, body rounded oblong in section. Sides flattened and decorated with numerous transverse furrows. In front is a pointed head with a short neck, mouth, and perforated slit for the nostril. Narrowed behind to form a handle. Traces of red paint.

17. (Not shown.) Club, of yellowish-brown sandstone. Shape irregularly long-oblong. The body is carved and shows four rudely made legs; it ends in front in a broad flattened head with large eyes and a wide mouth like that of a frog or toad.

18. (Fig. 2d.) Club, 35 cm long. The body is fish-shaped with flattened sides. The front end is shaped like a bird's head with large eyes and a hooked beak. On the upper edge are two conical crests (dorsal fins?). There is a round handle which ends in a pointed triangular knob. Along each side of the body are nine shallow incised grooves. There are traces of dull red paint.

19. (Fig. 2e.) Club, 26 cm long, of sandstone. The body is fish-shaped and flattened. On the upper edge are three oblong crests (fins?) and a smaller triangular one. The rounded lower edge shows a few transverse ridges, and is covered with red paint. There are six shallow grooves along each side. The handle occupies one-third of the length. The front end is plain and blunt.

20 and 21. (Not shown.) Two clubs of the same type. The sides of the body are flattened and decorated with shallow transverse grooves. The upper edge is cross-hatched. At the front is a squared head, below which projects a short curved beak. Round handles show traces of red paint.

22. (Fig. 2f.) Club, 30 cm long. The front half forms a head with long narrow jaws ending in a blunt snout which has oblique excavated nostrils. Eyes are shown above the inner angle of the mouth, and small ears are shown on the upper surface where the head joins the body. There is no constriction for the handle, the entire back half forming the body, which is decorated with incised lines.

23. (Fig. 2g.) Club, 32 cm long, carved to represent a bird. The front half forms a head with a long, narrow, and nearly straight beak. The back of the head is prominent and rounded. There are large round eyes above the angle of the mouth. On each side of the body is a raised carving representing a wing, with feathers indicated by oblique incised lines. On the upper edge near the posterior end is a tail. Part of the handle has been broken off.

24. (Fig. 2h.) Club, 39 cm long. This is a remarkably perfect specimen, mostly covered with dull red paint. The front two-fifths of its length is carved as a bird-like head with a large beak, the top edge of which is perforated by grooves from each side. The eyes are indicated above the inner angle of the beak and in front of a prominent transverse grooved ridge which extends over the upper surface. The sides of the body are slightly flattened and marked with numerous transverse incised lines. A short handle with a rounded knob occupies the back fifth of the baton.

25. (Fig. 2i). Club, 37 cm long. The front third forms a head with long narrow jaws. The upper jaw terminates in circular nostrils. Eyes are shown just behind the mouth, and small ears are shown on the upper surface where the head joins the body. The body occupies the middle third, and its flat sides are decorated with twelve rib-like ridges. The posterior third forms a smooth plain handle.

26. (Not shown.) Club, shaped like a fish but very imperfect.

27. (Fig. 2j.) Club, 22 cm long. The body is slim, somewhat curved, and fish-shaped, with a small head ending in a small circular mouth. The eyes are prominent. The body has seven rib-like transverse ridges on each side, which pass over the upper edge but are not continuous below. There is red paint on the handle.

28. (Fig. 2k.) Club. The front part forms a head, of which the snout or beak is broken off. The head has gill-like markings and circular eyes. The upper edge of the beak is perforated. The body, which also forms the handle, has flattened sides and incised grooves on the upper edge. (This club has strong similarities with No. 31, Fig. 1a.—W.D.)

29. (Not shown.) Club similar to No. 28. The handle and front of the snout are missing. The head has gill-like markings and a crest on the upper edge.

30. (Fig. 2l.) Ceremonial object, 35 cm long, shaped like a heavy boomerang. The ends expand to form what appear to be human heads, across the foreheads of which are six transverse ridges. The upper edge is decorated with shallow longitudinal grooves. The flat front and back surfaces are also decorated on the upper half with longitudinal grooves; the lower portion is covered with dull red paint.

31. (Fig. 1a.) Sandstone club, 34 cm long. This specimen was presented by A. W. Vowell to Dr. C. F. Newcombe and is now No. 9548 in the Provincial Museum collection. The front half represents a bird's head, with a long pointed bill, the upper edge of which is perforated by grooves from either side to form a nostril. Upper and lower mandibles are completely divided for more than an inch, and the underside of the lower mandible has a deep groove dividing the jaws. Circular eyes are prominent. Beginning on the back of the head and extending back to the handle is a network pattern formed by a series of diamond-shaped depressions separated by diagonal ridges. The body tapers to a plain handle. There are traces of red paint on the body. (Details of the beak and the feather pattern on the head and neck seem strikingly similar to those of a sandhill crane.—W.D.)

32. (Fig. 1b.) Club, 33 cm long. An old but elaborately carved specimen. The front end is in the form of a beak, with three prominent horizontal ridges above it, like folds of skin above the head of a turtle. On the neck are two more collar-like ridges. The cylindrical body is decorated with about twelve longitudinal furrows separated by low rounded ridges. These terminate at a deep groove which passes around the body, separating it from the large terminal knob, which is decorated with three transverse grooves. (The head resembles that of the surf scoter.—W.D.)

33. (Fig. 1c.) Club, 34 cm long. This specimen is remarkable for the arch of stone which extends from the back of the short head to the junction of the body and the handle. The jaws are furnished with distinct teeth, and the circular pitted eyes stand out boldly below the forehead. The body is decorated with numerous parallel longitudinal lines. The handle is smoothly finished and terminates with a blunt four-angled knob.[2]

34. (Fig. 1d.) Club, 39 cm long, the longest specimen in the collection. More smoothly finished than most, it is made of hard close-grained stone. The long cylindrical body tapers gently to a blunt cap at one end and a handle and blunt conical knob at the other. Near the front end is carved an owl's head in high relief, with two large orbits and a stright mandible overhung by a curved upper one, and a round performation between them.

Additional Clubs from the Upper Skeena

Three more sculptured stone clubs (Fig. 3) are known to us from the same general locality as the Hagwilget cache. One is said to be in New York, another is in the local museum at Hazelton, and the third is in the collection of the Provincial Museum. Each of these shows an obvious kinship with the series from the cache, and each augments the series with distinctive traits of type or style.

A 1. (Fig. 3a.) Club, size unknown. This club is known to us only from a small photograph in the Newcombe Collection. According to notes written on the back of the snapshot, it was found by a white man of New Hazelton (the white community closest to Hagwilgate) under the roots of a 2-foot cedar-tree in 1923. Dr. Newcombe received the photograph from W. B. Anderson in July 1923, and later the same month heard that the club had been purchased by George Heye, of New York (in which case it is now presumably in the Museum of the American Indian). This club has a blade identical in shape to those of Nos. 1 to 8 (Fig. 2a), but is unique in that the end of the handle is carved in the shape of a human head. The stylistic treatment of this head is very strange, and is not reminiscent of any other known sculpture of the region. The handle is also unique in having corrugated edges, and in the zigzag ridge which separates it from the blade.[3]

A 2. (Fig. 3b.) Club, 28 cm long. This fine club, in the private collection of Mrs. R. S. Sargent, is on exhibit in the Skeena Treasure House in Hazelton. The illustration is drawn from a photograph by the author. The club was found many years ago in a field on a terrace of the Bulkley River immediately below the old Hagwilget village. It is most remarkable for the fine craftsmanship with which it was made, and for its close similarity to No. 18 from the cache (Fig. 2d). The fine fluting which decorates the body, along the sides and across the belly, is masterfully done. The bird's head may be that of an owl or possibly a hawk.

A 3. (Fig. 3c.) Club, 30 cm long. Provincial Museum No. 4855, from the collection of the late Dr. H. C. Wrinch. Its exact provenience is unknown, but it is presumably from the Hazelton vicinity. A grotesque object of course brown sandstone, this "club" resembles the others in the series mostly in the form of its handle. The figure which makes up the body of the club is incomplete and defies identification.

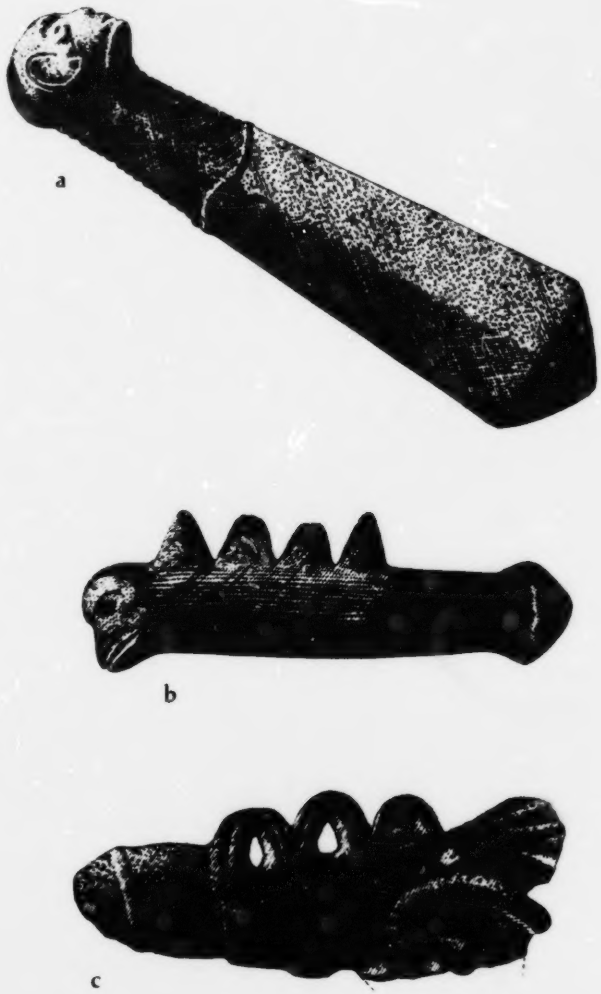


Fig. 3. Three additional clubs from the upper Skeena area: a, No. A 1; b, No. A 2, 28 cm long; c, No. A 3. *See* text for descriptions. (Drawn by Frank L. Beebe.)

---

[2] This club is illustrated in Dockstader, 1962 (Plate 1), with the erroneous caption "Found in a rock cave in Niska Valley by Lt. G. T. Emmons. Buckley Canyon, British Columbia." Museum of the American Indian, No. 5/5059.

[3] A beautiful photograph of this club is to be seen in Dockstader, 1962 (Plate 4). It is now No. 12/3273 in the collection of the Museum of the American Indian, and is said to come from "Two Mile Creek, Buckley Canyon." Its length is 13 inches.

Clubs from Metlakatla

In 1917 Harlan I. Smith, of the National Museum of Canada, sent Dr. Newcombe photographs of eleven additional stone clubs from the Tsimshian area (Fig. 4). These had been collected, ten from Metlakatla and one from Port Simpson, by Dr. I. W. Powell, the first Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia (Vowell's predecessor), and were presented to the National Museum in 1879. The descriptive comments below are based entirely upon the photographs. Dimensions are not known, but the photographs are presumably all of the same scale.

Metlakatla, the Christian Tsimshian village founded by William Duncan in 1862, occupies the site of one of the late-prehistoric winter villages of the lower Skeena Tsimshian. The ten tribes of this group wintered in a cluster of villages along Venn (Metlakatla) Passage until the 1830s, when they moved to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Port Simpson. Some of them moved back with Father Duncan, so that when Dr. Powell became acquainted with them and acquired the clubs, these Tsimshian occupied two villages—Metlakatla and Port Simpson. It is not known whether the clubs were family heirlooms or archaeological finds; however, it would seem likely that they were given to him as a set rather than singly. It is interesting to note in passing that many family lines of the lower Skeena Tsimshian claim to have migrated down the river from Temlaham in early times.

This Metlakatla series is noteworthy in itself, but it takes on even more significance when it is compared with the upper Skeena series. With one exception, these clubs were made with inferior craftsmanship and of indifferent stone. Some of them can be viewed as little else than poor copies of counterparts up the river, half-hearted copies based on half-forgotten prototypes. Why this should be the case is a question which invites all sorts of conjecture.

B 1. (Fig. 4a.) Club from Metlakatla, with a rudimentary handle and tapering blade decorated with an incised eye. (N.M.C. photograph 38059A.)

B 2. (Fig. 4b.) Club from Metlakatla, with a tapering handle and body carved in the form of a bird, similar to No. 14 (Fig. 2c). Although inferior to the latter in over-all form, this club has more surface decoration—incised marks in rows along the back and part of the side. (N.M.C. photograph 38061A.)

B 3. (Fig. 4c.) Club from Metlakatla, carved in the form of an animal with four fins(?) on its back. A comparison with No. 18 (Fig. 2d) and A 2 (Fig. 3b) will reveal that this club shares a similar concept with the other but is inferior in design and craftsmanship. (N.M.C. photograph 38057A.)

B 4. (Fig. 4d.) Club from Metlakatla. This too resembles one of the Hagwilget clubs (No. 19, Fig. 2e), and is an inferior version of a similar concept. Its form also begins to resemble the "slave killers" with multiple axe-like bits from the Columbia Valley and Northern California. (N.M.C. photograph 38057B.)

B 5. (Fig. 4e.) Club from Metlakatla, with handle and a stubby body in the form of a fish. The gills and eye may also be discerned. (N.M.C. photograph 38060A.)

B 6. (Fig. 4f.) Club from Metlakatla, rudely shaped in animal form, with a large mouth, eye, and ears(?). The concept is vaguely similar to that of No. 22 (Fig. 2f). (N.M.C. photograph 38056B.)

B 7. (Fig. 4g.) Pestle-shaped club from Port Simpson, with zoomorphic head. (N.M.C. photograph 38055A.)

B 8. (Fig. 4h.) Pestle-shaped club from Metlakatla, about 34 cm long. This finely sculptured and polished club, inlaid with abalone shell, was illustrated in the form of a simple line drawing by Harlan I. Smith (1923, Plate XXX), and he suggested that it was modern. The owl-like head is similar to that on No. 34 (Fig. 1d), and it has a small frog-like figure carved on the back. On the body of the club are two large circular disks, standing in relief and inlaid with abalone shell. (N.M.C. photograph 38055B.)

B 9. (Fig. 4i.) Club from Metlakatla. This specimen is like No. 33 (Fig. 1c) in having an arch of stone over the body, and a comparison of the two can only reinforce the impression that the up-river example is the prototype. The "eyes" extend completely through, and it is the only one of the clubs so perforated. (N.M.C. photograph 38061B.)

B 10. (Fig. 4j.) Club from Metlakatla, carved with a crude human head. Brows, eyes, large nose, mouth, and chin have been shaped by pecking. Additional forms on the front may represent arms. Although this carving is vaguely reminiscent of the human head on No. A 1 (Fig. 3a), it is too crude to permit a meaningful comparison. (N.M.C. photograph 38056A.)

B 11. (Fig. 4k.) Club from Metlakatla. Though quite crude, this is one of the most remarkable of all the clubs, because it bears a representation of a human body with the head on upside down. The head, which forms an expanded knob at the handle end, has a broad band passing across the forehead and down the sides, which is decorated with drilled(?) dots. The eye is shallow and circular, the nose plain and flat, the mouth a plain flat band. This head, at least in outline, resembles the "human heads" on either end of the boomerang-like object No. 30 (Fig. 2l). The body is carved in low relief along the central third of the club. There is a collar and a trunk with prominent ribs. A spindly arm with a large hand and leg with a large three-toed foot are also clearly depicted. (N.M.C. photograph 38060B.)

Still more stone clubs of this general Tsimshian complex probably exist in other museums and private collections, but no effort has been made to include them in this paper. In the Vancouver City Museum, for example, is one shaped like a "kingfisher," from Kitimat, somewhat similar in concept to Nos. 31 and 32 (Fig. 1a, b) but larger and more elaborate. And in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia is an excellent club from Khutzeymateen Inlet, somewhat like No. 14 (Fig. 2c) but with a projecting blade. These two at least are related to the Skeena River series and help to indicate its over-all distribution.

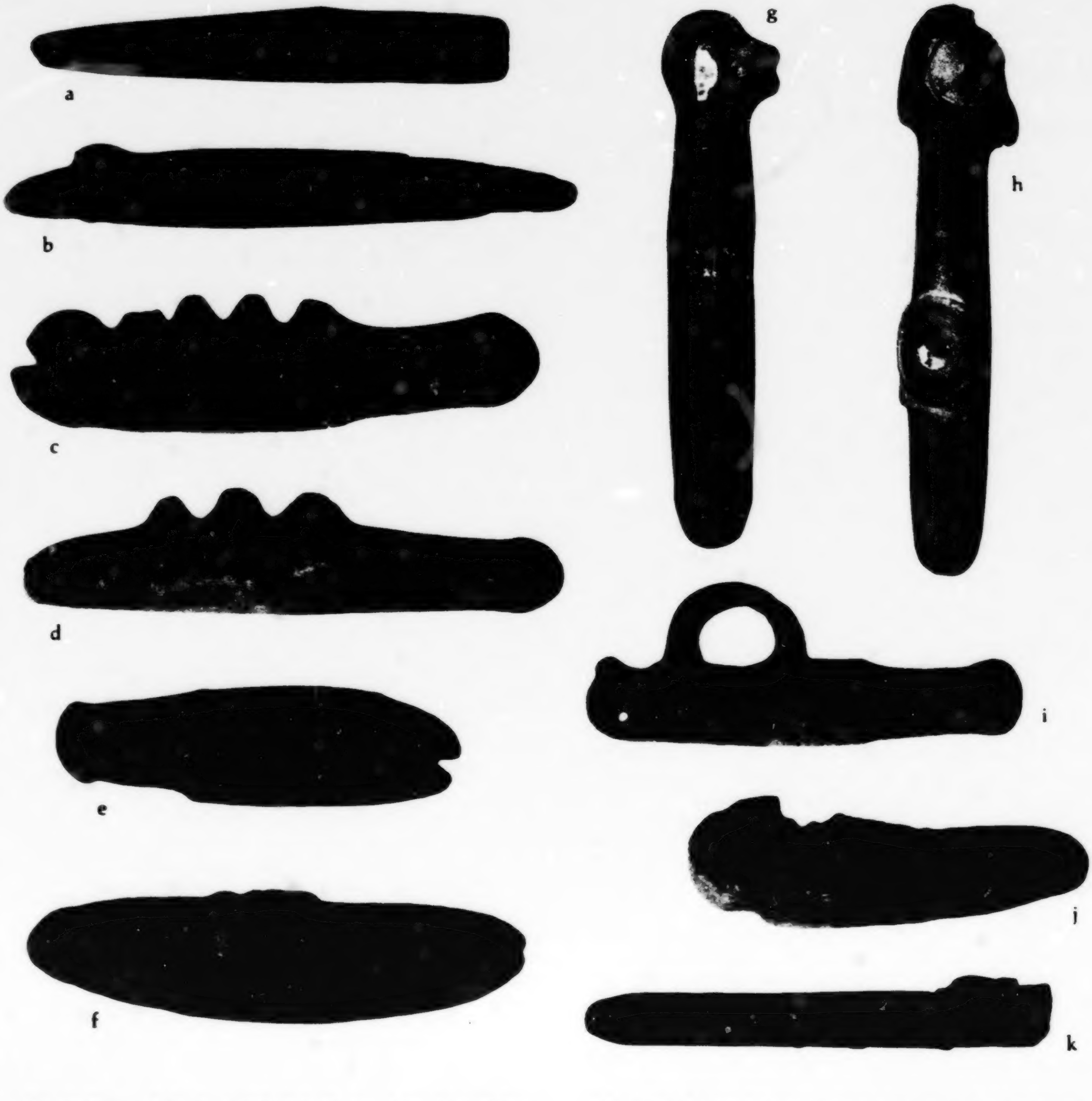


Fig. 4. Stone clubs from Metlakatla (a—f, h—k) and Port Simpson (g) in the National Museum of Canada: a, No. B 1; b, No. B 2; c, No. B 3; d, No. B 4; e, No. B 5; f, No. B 6; g, No. B 7; h, No. B 8; i, No. B 9; j, No. B 10; k, No. B 11. *See* text for descriptions. (From National Museum of Canada photographs 38055-38061.)

Stone Clubs in Tsimshian Traditions

Since both the upper Skeena series and the Metlakatla series come from areas which were occupied, in recent times at least, by Tsimshian-speaking Indians, one might reasonably expect to find some reference to such unusual objects in Tsimshian myths and traditions. And indeed there is one well-known story, that of Gao'a or Skawah, in which a carved stone club with supernatural powers has an important part. This is the origin myth of the Temlaham branch or clan of the Fireweed phratry (Gispuwadwada, Gisgast). It begins with a conflict between the people of two villages on opposite sides of a river (in most versions the Nass) in which warriors of one kill all the people of the other except one woman and her daughter Skawah. Skawah is taken as a bride by the son of the chief of the Sky, and in due course bears him four sons and a daughter. The Sky chief presents them with crests (including the Sun, Rainbow, and Stars) and supernatural powers for war, including a magical stone club, which is given to the youngest (and left-handed) brother. They return to earth at the site of their old village and destroy their former enemies. By pointing the club at the enemy and turning it over, they can uproot and overturn the enemy village. Later they lose the club and move to Temlaham. (Published versions of the story may be found in Barbeau, 1928, and Boas, 1902, pp. 221-25.)

Temlaham is the most famous of the ancestral homes of the Tsimshian. In the traditions it is said to have been a large town which stretched along the west bank of the Skeena just below the present Hazelton. A severe local winter and famine, which came as supernatural retribution for the mistreatment of animals, drove the people from the town. It is remembered as their place of origin by many families of the Gispuwadwada phratry of the Nass River and Coastal Tsimshian, and also by most families of two phratries of the Gitksan tribes up the Skeena. Although the traditions are quite explicit on the location of this ancestral town, no trace of it can be seen today.

Summary and Comparisons

CLUB TYPES

Clubs of stone have been found in small numbers at scattered locations along the western slope of North America (Smith, 1907, pp. 412-20). Those from the Skeena River now make up one of the largest known concentrations, but the types found here are not the same as those found in other areas. In fact, the types and distributions of stone clubs do not seem to fall into clear patterns at all. Perhaps we should not expect them to; having outlasted their counterparts made of less imperishable materials, they are in a sense random relics of former patterns of club types and distributions, yet it is impossible to say how truly they in themselves mirror those patterns.

The Skeena River clubs are not all of the same type. For purposes of comparison we may recognize in them local varieties of four different types, distinguished by the shape of their striking surfaces:

(1) Blade flat and paddle-shaped (Figs. 2a, 3a).
(2) Long, cylindrical, pestle-shaped (Figs. 1d, 4g, h).
(3) Body with projecting points or blades (Figs. 2d, e, 3b, 4c, d).
(4) Body sculptured into animal or other form (Figs. 1a-c, 2c-k, 3b, c, 4b-f).

Clubs with paddle-shaped blades, made more frequently of bone than of stone, have been found from California to the Skeena, though no others are of exactly the same shape as those from the Hagwilget cache. The most numerous and distinctive type is the whale-bone club of the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Gulf of Georgia, and, more rarely, the lower and middle Fraser and Columbia Valleys (Boas in Smith, 1907, pp. 403-12). This type seems to date from late prehistoric and early historic times. It differs from the Hagwilget type in that the blade has a rounded end and a lozenge-shaped cross-section, and the handle is carved with a bird- or human-like head and is perforated for a lanyard. The few additional flat-bladed stone clubs which are known have been found singly, in widely scattered locations, and show much individual variation in details of form (e.g., Smith, 1907, pp. 412-17). The Skeena River examples, in short, may be regarded as a distinct local variation on a widespread theme.

Long cylindrical stone implements have also been found in several parts of Western North America, but they have been called pestles more often than clubs. The Provincial Museum collection contains four unsculptured examples from Tsimshian and Haida territories, and these are catalogued as pestles (Nos. 750, 1482, 1707, 1712). However, Niblack (1890, Pl. XXVII) illustrates a similar one from Port Simpson, calling it a war club. Elsewhere, as for example on the Columbia, similar implements were used as pestles. While we may assume from their associations that the Skeena River examples are in fact clubs, they would appear to borrow their general form from a widespread type of pestle.

Stone clubs with projecting axe-like blades, and often with two or more blades set in line, have been found in greatest numbers in Northern California and the lower Columbia Valley, where they are called slave-killers. A very small number of the same general type, occasionally with sculptured handles, have been found as far north as the Gulf of Georgia (Duff, 1956, p. 87). Clubs of this type can be conceived as replicas of war picks and tomahawks made entirely of stone; war picks of similar concept, using a jade point set in a wooden or antler handle, were also used on the northern Northwest Coast. Here again the few of this type in the Skeena complex are local expressions of a widespread concept.

It is those which have the entire body sculptured into an animal or other form which do not seem to have close counterparts among stone clubs elsewhere. Such a modification detracts from their utility as clubs, and suggests that some motive other than usefulness dictated their form. Among the wooden artifacts of the Northwest Coast, rattles, batons, and sea-mammal clubs also shared the combination of a plain handle and a sculptured body. In these cases the sculpture seems mostly to have been in the nature of ornamentation, although magical and crest associations have often been suggested as well. Perhaps it was the same with the stone clubs. But it remains a puzzle why they should have been made of stone in the first place; certainly the choice was not suggested by the availability of an attractive or easily worked kind of stone (as could well have been the case with Fraser River soapstone sculpture). Probably the material was used to conform to some magical or traditional prototype.

ART STYLE

Although it may not be proper to judge the art style of a period and area on the basis of a single form especially when it is made from a poor and difficult material, the fine craftsmanship and sculptural variety of the upper Skeena stone clubs do permit some comments on their style. In general, that style does not show any strong similarity with any other known style of stone sculpture, nor, surprisingly, with the classic Northwest Coast style which was present in the area throughout historic times. The only trait which it seems to share with the recent coastal style is a tendency to favour animal and human motifs. The clubs show no complex compositions of two or more figures, nor do they show any examples of the distinctive recent type of surface decoration which uses eye designs, rounded rectangles, and feather patterns in rigidly conventionalized shapes. The surface decoration on the clubs consists of parallel grooves and ridges, sometimes in quite complex patterns reminiscent of the decorative adzing on some old Coast Indian boxes. Zigzag and network patterns were occasionally used, and in addition many of the clubs were painted red. Most of the animals depicted on the clubs are birds, with the owl and crane predominating. Vague "fish" and "wolf" forms are also present. The animals tend to be portrayed realistically rather than in the stylized manner of the recent art style. The eyes are invariably small simple circles, and there is no hint of the distinctive "Northwest Coast eye" with its large iris enclosed by two doubly recurved lids. The art style shown on the clubs, in short, seems to be a quite distinct local style which preceded the classic Northwest Coast style in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

Two groups of stone clubs from the Tsimshian area have been described and illustrated—one from the upper Skeena River, and the other from Metlakatla on the coast near its mouth. The two series are obviously related to each other, and the relationship seems to be that most of the clubs in the Metlakatla series are poorly made copies of prototypes which may be found, superior in craftsmanship and more specific in concept, in the upper Skeena series. The implied suggestion that the complex is an original up-river development which spread to the coast is reinforced by Tsimshian traditions which link the use of such clubs with Temlaham, the traditional homeland up the river from which many coastal families claim to have migrated in the not too distant past.

The clubs are not all of a single type; in fact, the complex is made up of local variations of three widespread types (clubs with paddle-shaped blades, clubs shaped like pestles, and clubs with projecting points or blades) and a unique local type in which the entire body of the club is sculptured into an animal or other form. The material of which most of the clubs are made is not suitable either for sculpture or for effective use as clubs; therefore, the stimulus to use stone must have come from some magical or crest concept. The art style is not like that on any other known body of sculpture, and shows little relationship with the recent classic style of the coast. If, as we assume, the clubs are of no great antiquity, it would seem that the famous coast style was not present along the Skeena River until late in prehistoric times. The clubs provide a hint, perhaps, of the relative recency of the classic culture of the northern Northwest Coast, and also a glimpse of what preceded it.

Bibliography

Barbeau, Marius

1928 *The Downfall of Temlaham.* The Macmillan Co., Toronto.

1929 Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia. *Bulletin No. 61,* National Museum of Canada, Ottawa

Boas, Franz

1902 Tsimshian Texts. *Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 27,* Washington, D.C.

Dockstader, F. J.

1962 *Indian Art in America.* New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, Conn.

Duff, Wilson

1956 Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia. *Anthropology in British Columbia, No. 5,* British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

Jenness, Diamond

1943 The Carrier Indians of the Bulkley River. Their Social and Religious Life. *Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 133,* pp. 469-586, Washington, D.C.

Niblack, A. P.

1890 The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia. *Report of the National Museum, 1887-88.* Washington, D.C.

Smith, Harlan I.

1907 Archaeology of the Gulf of Georgia and Puget Sound. *Memoirs of the American Museum of History,* Vol. IV, Part VI. New York.

1923 An Album of Prehistoric Canadian Art. *Victoria Memorial Museum. Department of Mines. Bulletin No. 37,* Ottawa.

A "Hagwilget" Club from England

Donald N. Abbott
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Jonathan C. H. King
MUSEUM OF MANKIND
BRITISH MUSEUM

When Wilson Duff was writing "Stone Clubs from the Skeena River Area" (Duff, 1963 and this volume) he remarked to Abbott with some delight that he was in effect co-authoring a paper with someone whom he had never met and who had been dead many years. He based the article upon a file of notes made by Dr. C. F. Newcombe and considered that he was completing what had obviously been Newcombe's intention of preparing this material for publication. Wilson would have appreciated the rather parallel situation involved in the present note offering a supplement to his, and Newcombe's, report. It results from a discovery made while this memorial to Wilson Duff was in preparation.

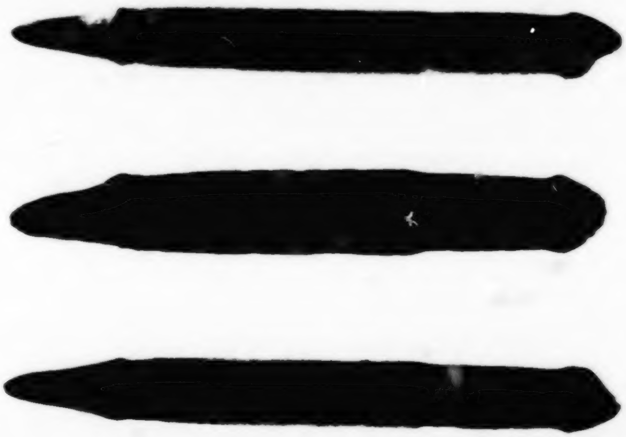
Since Duff's article was published more stone clubs, apparently related to those described by Duff and Newcombe, have come to light, including two from the Queen Charlotte Islands and another in a private collection in Hazelton (George MacDonald, pers. comm.). Unquestionably, however, the Skeena club with the most extraordinary provenience is the one brought in to King at the Museum of Mankind (Ethnography Department of the British Museum) in 1979 which had been discovered buried in an English country garden. King recognized the club for what it was (it had been identified as a "Victorian knife sharpening stone"!) and sought confirmation from Dr. George MacDonald at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa and from Abbott.

There can be no question that the specimen is, in fact, another club belonging to the same series as those from the Hagwilget cache. It is not identical with any of those described by Duff and Newcombe but it combines highly significant attributes found in several of them, notably the bird's head at the distal end, striated shaft, and phallic handle. It is superbly executed, making it clear, according to Duff's assessment (Duff, 1963:33, 38 and this vol.: 100, 103) that it belongs with the upriver group rather than the cruder Metlakatla series.

Description

The specimen is a monolithic club made of grey igneous rock decorated in three sections. The centre, of oval cross section, is carved with parallel longitudinal pecked grooves or striations. One end is carved as a phallus, that is as a cylinder surmounted with a cone, while the opposite end is in the form of the head of a bird, possibly a raven. The mouth is represented by a single straight line and the eyes by two raised circular rings in slight depressions. A small section has been broken off the cone of the phallus. The club shows traces of what may be ochre pigment.

Length: 37.7cms
Maximum Height: 5.3 cms
Maximum Width: 4.3 cms



Courtesy British Museum

Comparisons

The club is very similar to those from the Hagwilget cache discovered in 1898, and, less directly, to the group collected by I. W. Powell from Metlakatla and Port Simpson in 1879. Duff listed 34 in the former group and illustrated 16 of them; many were not found at that time (Duff, 1963). Of those which were not found or illustrated in 1963 none fits the description of the present club. Some of the illustrated examples are carved with phallic finials (Duff, 1963: figs. 1c, d; 2c, d & h; and 3b), while others are decorated with parallel incised grooves along the central section (Duff, 1963: figs. 1b, c; 2b, d, e; 3b). As an example of the fourth type in Duff's simple typology ("Body sculptured into animal or other form") the English club shows obvious similarity to others whose distal end is represented as the head of a bird, fish or mammal with mouth nearly parallel to the club's long axis (Duff, 1963: fig. 2c, d, f-k; 3b; 4b, e, f). Of these, only Duff's numbers 18 and A2 (Duff, 1963: figs. 2d and 3b) combine the same three elements of a bird head, incised shaft, and phallic finial but they differ in the form of the bird's head (*i.e.*, the particular bird represented), in the cross section of the shaft, and in having two or four conical knobs on the back. The beak shape is closest to that on one of the Metlakatla clubs in the National Museum of Man, XII-B-556 (Duff, 1963: fig. 4b and 1975: 125 and 185, #111). It is also comparable to that on the Raven Bowl, FT/FU-y: 13 (old number 4115) in the British Columbia Provincial Museum (Duff, 1975: 154 and 188, #131 R).

While it is not surprising that more stone clubs related to this tradition should turn up, the source of this one is an intriguing mystery. It was found by Mr. C. H. Wallace on his property in Grantham, Lincolnshire at a depth of three feet at the base of a wall while he was preparing the ground for a new lawn. It lay below a mass of rusty iron and was most likely buried there as part of the fill at the time of completion of the house in 1936 when the ground was being levelled around the wall. Between then and 1974 the house had been rented to a succession of tenants. So far, it has not been possible to establish who might have brought the club to England or how it may have come to be buried at the base of a wall.

The club has now been acquired by the Museum of Mankind (British Museum) and has the registration number 1979 Am 10 1.

References

Duff, Wilson

1963 Stone Clubs from the Skeena River Area. *Report for the Year 1962. Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology*, pp. 27-38, Victoria. Reprinted in this volume.

1975 *Images Stone B.C.* Hancock, Saanichton.

Ninstints Notebook

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF AN EXPEDITION IN 1957 TO SALVAGE HAIDA TOTEM POLES AT NINSTINTS

John H. Smyly

BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Line drawings by the author

For many years, while anthropologist at the Provincial Museum, Victoria, Wilson Duff yearned to visit Anthony Island, at the southern tip of the Queen Charlotte Islands. There, in the abandoned Haida village of Ninstints, stood what he described as the "last and richest source" of totem poles. Wilson wished to examine the village and see if it would be possible to salvage a few columns before further exposure to weather and wood-boring insects destroyed them completely. But, for years, a lack of Museum funds had prevented such an expedition.

Finally, Wilson was able to arrange for a combination of government and private funding for a salvage expedition. In October 1956, with the assistance of the H.M.C.S. *Brockville*, members from the Museum were able to pay a brief visit to Anthony Island, primarily to examine the totems and obtain the information necessary for salvage work. Wilson then flew to Skidegate in April 1957, to confer with the Band Council over the proposed salvage. Each pole was still the property of the descendants of the person for whom it was carved and, after seventy years, determining ownership often posed an elaborate genealogical problem. It was necessary to obtain both the owner's permission and the permission of the Band Council before salvage operations were undertaken.

The Skidegate Band Council agreed to allow a salvage expedition to go to Ninstints. The totem poles were to be brought out for storage at Victoria and the University of British Columbia.

In the summer of 1957, the expedition members, together with a C.B.C. television crew and a provincial government photographer, travelled south from Skidegate with the three-man native crew of the chartered fishing vessel *Seiner II*. The naval auxiliary vessel *Laymore* was appointed to meet the crew at Louscoone Inlet a week or so later to pick up the crated poles.

Anthony Island is almost inaccessible, even during the summer. There is no permanent human settlement of any size within 150 miles. The coastline is broken and rocky, open to winds off the Pacific Ocean. There is no harbour where a vessel any larger than a rowboat can shelter close to the island.

And collecting totem poles was not like collecting sea shells or white-footed mice. Some of the poles were almost fifty feet in height. They weighed tons. Unlike the metal-and-concrete sculptures which are swung about by art galleries with apparent ease, totem poles were incredibly fragile despite their enormous size. Exposed for years to the relentless grind of wind and rain, those at Ninstints had become soft and porous and had started to crumble. They would have to be lowered with the most basic of rope-and-tackle equipment, crated to protect the carvings from damage, and floated out into the bay where they could be loaded onto a sea-going vessel. Many would have suggested that the project was impossible. Wilson Duff, with quiet insistence, made it possible.

On Thursday, June 20, 1957, the seiner anchored off the eastern side of Anthony Island, near the entrance to Ninstints cove. A rocky, brush-covered islet sat right in the middle of the bay. Behind the islet, and tucked around the rim of the cove was the totem-pole village of Ninstints, decimated by war and disease in the nineteenth century and abandoned almost a hundred years ago.

The channel on the north side of the islet was not navigable, even when high tide filled the cove with water. The passage was entirely blocked with huge boulders. When the tide receded, the cove emptied and uncovered rocks in the south channel as well. All journeys to and from the seiner with camp gear and crating materials were made in a skiff and a rowboat, at favourable tides, and even then caution had to be employed to navigate the double hazard of rocks and thick beds of kelp.

Circling the cove in a long irregular line with only a grassy border separating them from the beach, stood the largest remaining group of carved poles anywhere in the world—more than thirty. Most of them were the stubby mortuaries, usually about twenty feet high, which were designed to hold grave boxes in a hollowed cavity at the top. Some of these mortuaries were partly burnt as the result of a brush fire that had destroyed part of the village before 1900. Two tall memorials stood at the south end of the village, and two house frontal poles stood to the north. All poles were weathered to a silver-grey and were in varying stages of decay. At all other abandoned villages, standing totems could be counted on two hands. The sheltered, eastern-facing site of Ninstints had undoubtedly contributed to this remarkable survival.

On the first day at Ninstints, a campsite was established, supplies unloaded from the seiner, and a preliminary photographic record of the site made before nightfall. The next morning the heavy work and the famous Queen Charlotte Island rains began together.

The cutting and lowering of the poles soon achieved a kind of pattern. An inside housepost which had originally been erected in a position of honour inside a plank house, some forty feet square, still stood with the house framework in ruins around it. The pole was roped securely to nearby trees to keep it from falling, and then the column was cut through at the base. When it was gently lowered, face down, everyone heaved and pushed to turn it over onto supports until it could be crated.

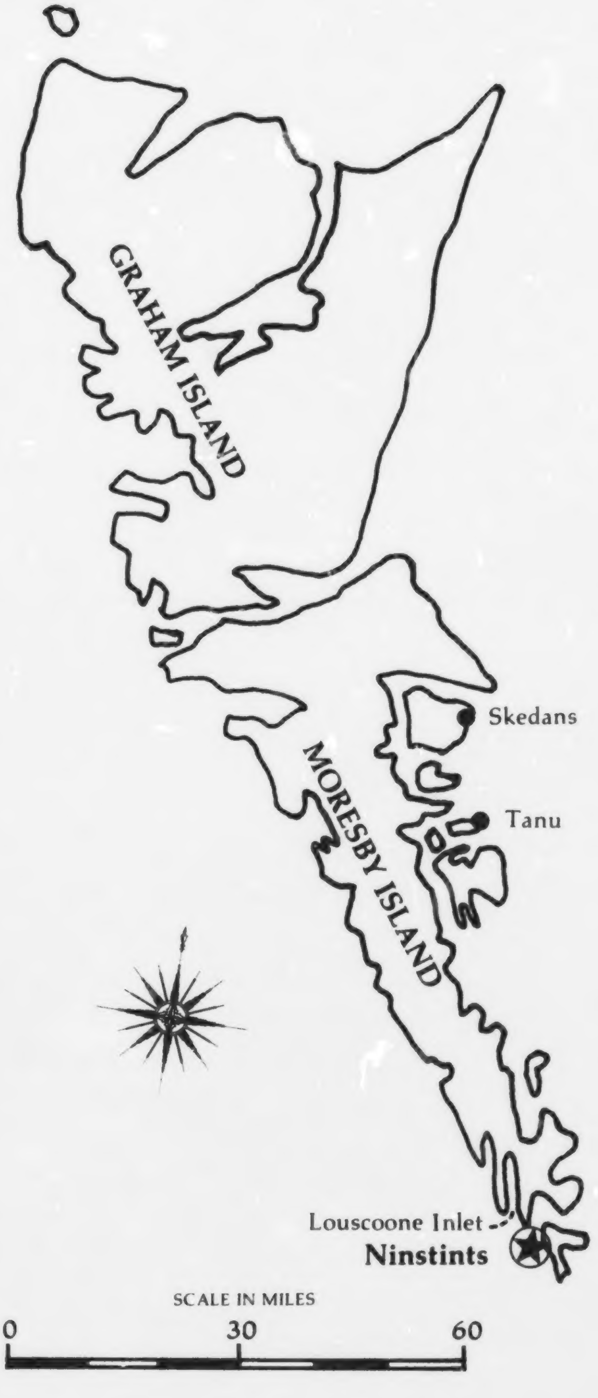
A tall house frontal pole was next. This once stood against the outside front wall of a dwelling, and a doorway had been cut through the base to allow entrance into the house. There were four major carvings and many minor figures on the pole. At Wilson's suggestion, a bed of spruce boughs was prepared to prevent damage to the carvings when the column was lowered.

Added to the general difficulties was the fact that the huge poles had to be sawn through by hand. A powersaw, which had been included as part of the essential equipment for such a task, had become damp on its journey and could not be made to function. The project would have stopped right there except that, due to Wilson's foresight, a cross-cut saw was among the inventory of tools and that was made to serve.

The house frontal pole was forty-eight feet seven inches high. It had to be sawn into three sections for crating because of its enormous size and weight. No one enjoyed dividing it and every care was taken to ensure the cuts came between carved sections.

The days that followed were punctuated by heavy downpours that flooded the camp tents at one point and forced the seiner to move several miles to a more sheltered location. During this time the crew succeeded in lowering and crating sixteen sections of totem poles.

The most difficult was the mortuary of Chief Kanskinai. It had been carved from a log almost four feet through at the wider end, and bore the design of a grizzly bear and a



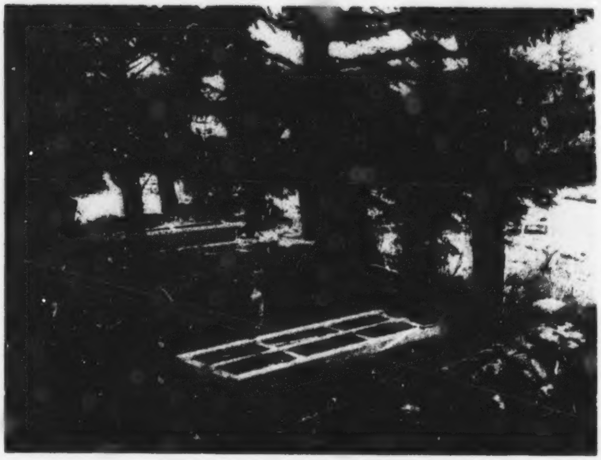
small whale. The top portion of the column surrounding the grave box cavity had to be cut off to do away with excessive weight even though this meant sacrificing a relief carving of the whale's dorsal fin on each side at the top. As with all the poles, the mortuary was soaking wet and a tangle of roots grew all through it. The cross-cut saw, which was none too sharp to begin with, would either snag on these roots or the cut would close, jamming the saw. Then wedges were driven in, or pieces were chopped away with the axe, so that sawing could continue. The original measurements of the pole were twenty feet eight inches long by four feet in diameter. Even with five feet cut off the top, all of the crew shoving together could not budge it.

A block and tackle from the seiner's rigging was brought into use. A sled was constructed and a track of driftwood was laid down to the beach. Small, round logs were gathered to be used as rollers. With ropes snubbed around each end, and padded (at one point with Wilson's jacket) to keep them from cutting into the carving, the column was rolled over onto the improvised sled. It inched over, an enormous dead weight, and finally flopped with a crash onto its cradle, breaking some of the sled's cross-pieces in the process. For a tense moment it seemed as if its momentum would carry it off the other side, but it settled back into place.

The tackle was then dragged down to the beach, one end fastened to the huge mortuary, the other tied to rocks projecting from the small island in the cove. The pole was then pulled, inch by desperate inch, down to the beach. It was a two-hour struggle and then it began to rain. As soon as everyone stopped to suit up in rain gear, the rain would stop and the sun would reappear. When the crew became uncomfortably warm and discarded their outer clothing, it would rain again.

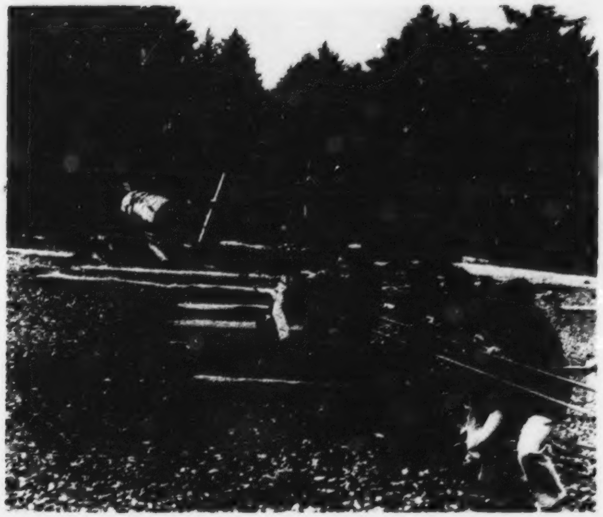
Because of the great weight of the pole, crating brought a new set of problems. With the other poles, crates had been constructed around three sides and then the pole and crate were turned together to allow the fourth side of the crate to be nailed into place. With Chief Kanskinai's pole, however, it was decided that the best approach would be to crate it on the beach below the tide level so that when the in-coming water surrounded the pole and floated it, it could be turned over in the water, secured by ropes to the beach and then finished when the tide receded once more.

All went according to plan. The crate was turned and the fourth side nailed into place at low tide. Then the crate was tied to logs higher up the beach. Unfortunately, the ropes worked loose one night when the wind and rain set up a light chop in the tiny bay. The following morning the crew woke to find their precious crate adrift and



The poles were crated for their removal from Anthony Island. Because of their great weight and the lack of machinery to lift and turn them, it was necessary to crate them on three sides and then turn them by hand to complete the fourth side. B.C. GOVERNMENT PHOTO

Lowering the poles without benefit of modern machinery involved an anxious time with block and tackle. Here Wilson Duff (in the white shirt) and Dr. Wayne Suttles guide the careful descent. If the pole had slipped, its great weight and water-logged condition would almost certainly have meant its destruction. B.C. GOVERNMENT PHOTO



Chief Kanskinai's mortuary was more than four feet through and weighed above two and a half tons. Getting it down took the combined efforts of seven stalwart men. Putting it up in the first place was a major achievement. B.C. GOVERNMENT PHOTO

When the poles were crated, they were rolled to the water's edge where the incoming tide floated them. Already water-logged, a further dip in salt water would do them no harm; in fact, towing them out of the bay with a small boat was the only way of getting them past the submerged rocks which prevented larger vessels from approaching the village. B.C. GOVERNMENT PHOTO

knocking hard against the rocks in the wilder water at the mouth of the bay. A long-suffering crew member, already soaked to the skin by the night-long downpour was sent to fasten a rope around the crate and to secure it to rocks so that it would not wash out to sea. When the weather settled down, it was pulled back to the beach.

As the days passed, all the salvaged sections were crated and dragged to the beach. On the evening of June 28, the crated totems were pushed down on the beach to await the incoming tide. Part of the crew stayed up half the night and at high tide, by the light of lanterns and using the rowboat, they secured all the crates together, and anchored them with ropes to the beach. The following day a message came in from the *Laymore* and the camp was dismantled. The seiner was loaded once again and the crated totems were strung out in a long line and brought out from the cove to be fastened to the stern of the seiner. A rendezvous had been set up with the *Laymore* at Louscoone Inlet and, with several nostalgic backward glances, the crew turned to the final stages of the expedition.

At 5:00 a.m. on June 30, the two vessels met in Louscoone Inlet and the long line of crates was drawn alongside the naval vessel and lifted aboard. A cable was passed around the centre of each crate and it was carefully winched upwards. The crated poles were piled on deck and roped down. The seiner then returned to its base at Skidegate, and the *Laymore* continued south down the west coast of Vancouver Island to Victoria. Some poles were to be unloaded in Victoria; the remainder were to continue on to Vancouver under a sharing arrangement between the Museum and the University of British Columbia.

Even this routine trip south was not entirely without incident. Part way across Queen Charlotte Sound the sea became rough. The ship tossed this way and that and the crew, warmly housed below deck, became aware of an ominous scraping sound overhead. They rushed on deck to find that the whole cargo of totem poles had shifted four feet to starboard, crushing a couple of the crates. If it had not been for the guard-rails, all of the crates would have gone into the sea. Crew members rushed to lash a few more steel cables around the crates and to put a brace or two in where it would do the most good. The captain expressed confidence that even if the crates had gone overboard, they would not have sunk and could have been recovered, but museum personnel were thankful that they were not called upon to witness the exercise.

The rest of the trip went smoothly. The poles reached their destinations, were dried out slowly over a period of months and underwent careful inspection and treatment. Some sections have been displayed for the public at exhibitions in Vancouver and Victoria. For the visitors, more than a million persons who enter the Provincial Museum each year, the experience in three-dimensional reality of the astounding heritage left to the world by the Indian people of British Columbia is one that they will not easily forget.

That the poles are available for viewing by so many is a tribute as well to Wilson Duff who organized and carried out successfully a difficult and sometimes dangerous salvage expedition.

A Ninstints grave-house frontal pole with the crest of a grizzly bear holding a frog in its mouth. Ninstints today has the largest remaining stand of such poles, surrounded by stinging nettle, salal and spruce, their tops bristling with the moss, fern and seedlings that will cause their eventual destruction. JOHN SMYLY PHOTO

Ninstints Poles formerly in safe-keeping in the British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria. Returned to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1976.

Frontal	(See Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, Vol. II)	p. 536	Prince Rupert Victoria	1935 1963
Frontal	"	p. 523 (left)	Prince Rupert Victoria	1935 1971
Frontal	"	p. 522 (centre)	Prince Rupert Victoria	1935 1971
Frontal	"	p. 571 (right)	Prince Rupert Victoria	1935 1971
Frontal	"	p. 505 (centre)	Prince Rupert Victoria	1935 1964

Ninstints Poles now in British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

Memorial	—	Watchman	W. Duff collected 1957
Memorial	—	Watchman	"
Frontal	—	Bear Mother	"
Frontal	—	Watchman -from Beaver pole	"
Mortuary	—	Bear and Whale	"

Ninstints Poles at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Frontal —	Beaver (only) burnt pole	W. Duff collected 1957
Frontal —	Bear (only)	"
Frontal —	Cormorant, Bear	"
Frontal —	Eagle, Frog	"
Mortuary —	Whale, Bear	"
Inside Housepost —	Human, Bear	"
Inside Housepost —	Bear (only) burnt pole	"

Measurements of a Ninstints Mortuary House

Because of the inaccessibility of Anthony Island, it is only very rarely that Museum personnel get an opportunity to study the village in a scientific manner. Most visits to the site are restricted by tides and weather to an hour or two, a few photographs, a hasty count and assessment of the continuing forces of decay.

The ten-day, 1957 expedition allowed time for more detailed measurements to be taken of the house excavations and the structural members which remained. A small mortuary house was found in ruins near the centre of the village. Because of its similarity to the dwelling houses in style, if not in size, the following measurements were taken, and notes made on those features of construction which remained.

MORTUARY HOUSE

Width — 21 feet
(from centres of corner posts)
Length — 18 feet

CORNER POSTS

Corner posts were round and tapered slightly downwards. They had a rectangular section near the top which was mortised right through to receive the gable plates.

Height	6'3"
Diameter:	1'1"
Height to underside gable:	3'4"
Length of mortise:	1'10"

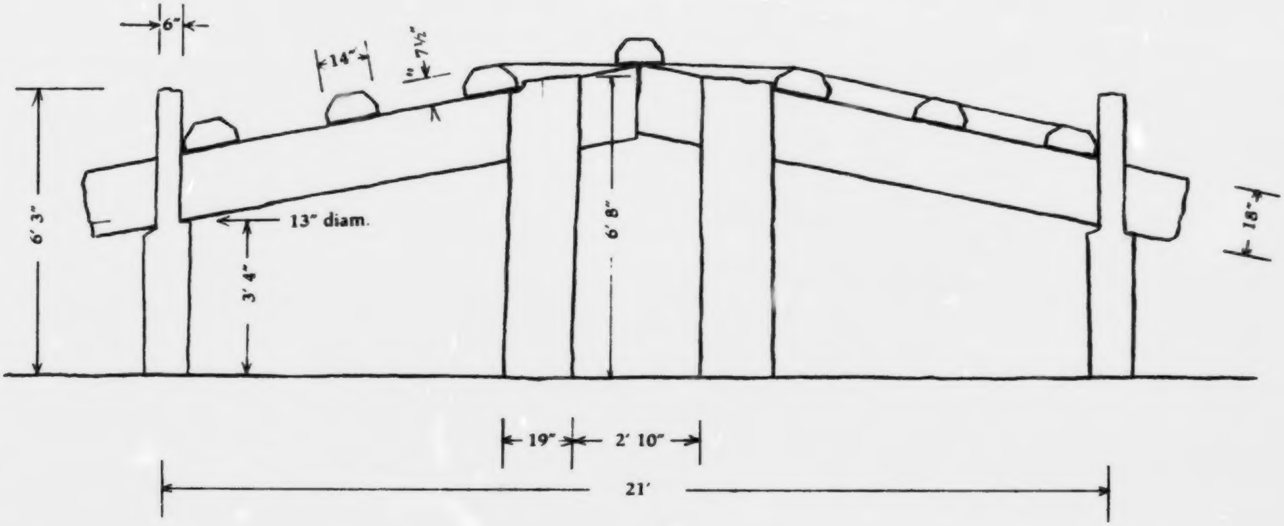
CENTRAL SUPPORTS — FRONT

The central supports were hewn to a half-octagon shape for their full length with the flat side facing out. They were half-lapped with a sloping shoulder on the inside near the top to receive the gable. The front supports were flush against the sides of the house-frontal pole.

Height:	6'8"
Width:	1'7"
Depth:	7'

CENTRAL SUPPORTS — REAR

These were similar to the front supports but they were placed further apart. The flat side faced out.



GABLES

The gable plates were several inches wider at the peak of the roof, tapering to the lower ends. They were grooved along the bottom edge to receive the wall planks. A hole, 1½ inches diameter, had been bored every three to five inches to a depth of two inches, then the remaining wood had been chiselled out. Several large iron staples on the inside held the two ends of the gable plates together at the centre.

Length:	front gables	12′6″
	rear gables	13′8″
Width:	upper end	20″
	lower end	18″
Depth:		5″

ROOF BEAMS

The roof beams projected 22″ beyond the front gable and approximately 12″ at the rear. They were bevelled to a half-octagon shape on the projecting portion. The rest of the beam was the natural half round of the tree.

Length:		20′10″
Width:	(front)	14″
Depth:	(front)	1½″

SIDE BEAMS

The side beams lay flush against the corner posts and were grooved along their underside to receive the wallboards.

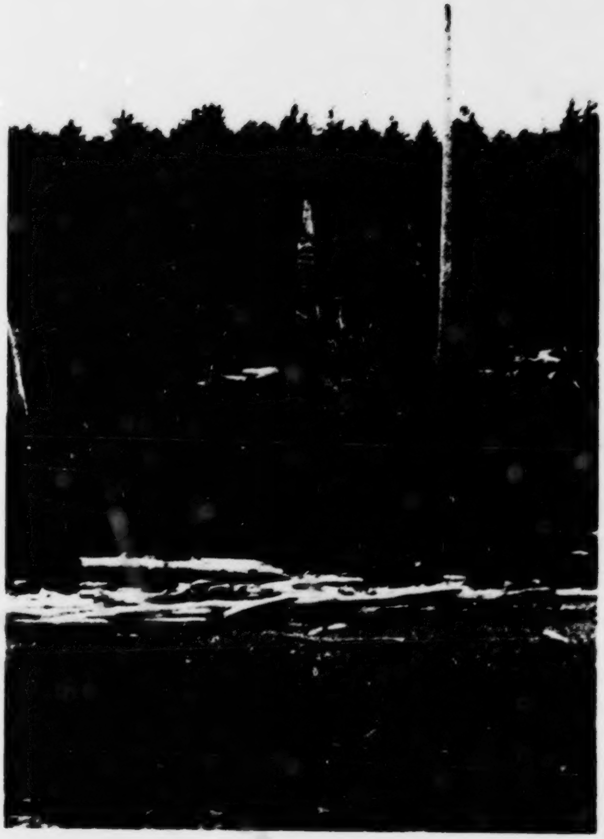
Cross-pieces on the two uppermost beams supported a ridge beam which did not project beyond the house front.

WALL BOARDS

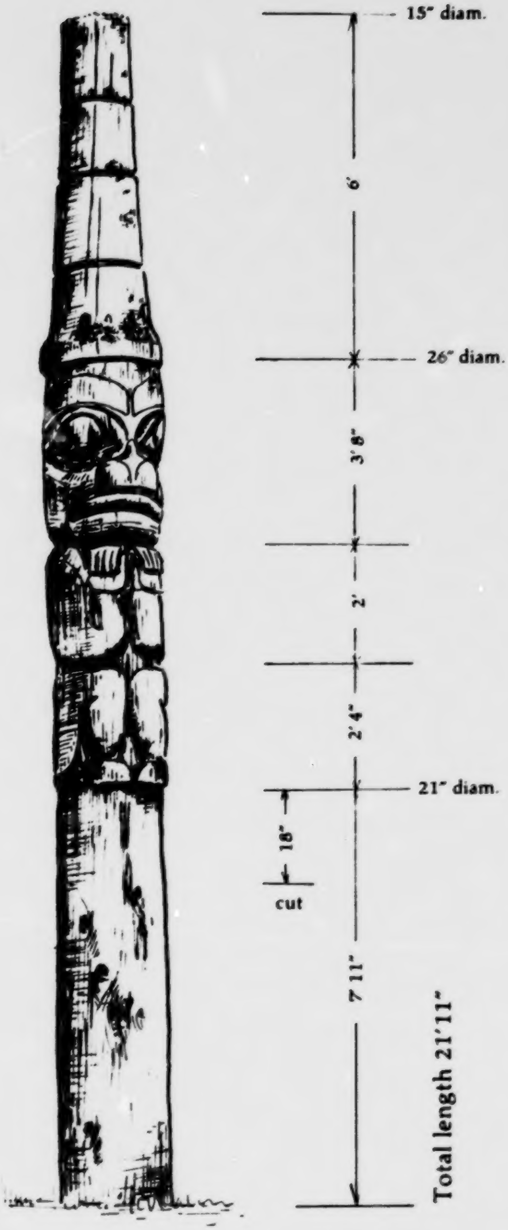
There was no evidence of ground plates for this structure and the lower ends of the wall boards were stuck in the earth.

FRONTAL POLE

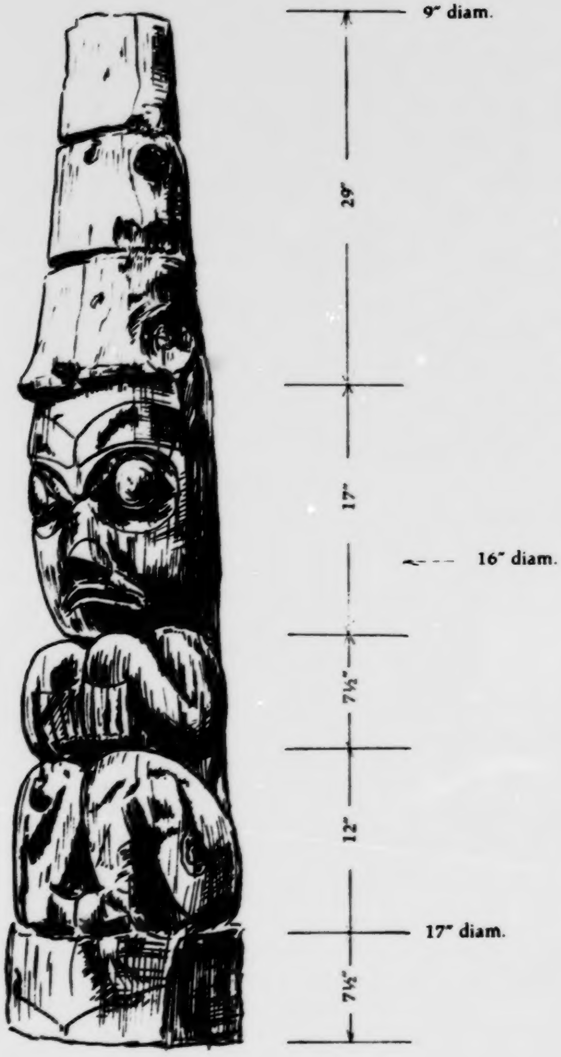
The frontal pole for this structure was broken off at a height of 9′6″. The top was decayed beyond recognition. The lower piece, that of a bear with a frog in its mouth, was salvaged. Total length of the frontal pole was 28 feet.



Photograph of part of Ninstints Village taken by Dr. C. F. Newcombe showing the mortuary house as it looked in 1901. British Columbia Provincial Museum Photograph PN 296.


15" diam.
6'
26" diam.
3' 8"
2'
2' 4"
21" diam.
18"
cut
7' 11"
Total length 21'11"

Haida Memorial
Ninstints, Q.C.I.
COLLECTED 1957 W. DUFF


9" diam.
29"
17"
16" diam.
7½"
12"
17" diam.
7½"

Haida Watchman
Ninstints, Q.C.I.
COLLECTED 1957 W. DUFF

Notes on the Thompson Winter Dwelling

Andrea Laforet
CANADIAN ETHNOLOGY SERVICE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MAN

Annie York

I am indebted to Dr. Laurence C. Thompson for his painstaking assistance in correcting the orthography of the native terms and for critical discussion of the content of the paper. Nancy Condrashoff read the manuscript and made helpful suggestions based on her own field work on Shuswap winter dwellings. Alan Hoover and Dr. Harry Hawthorn also read the manuscript and offered thoughtful and critical comment.

A.L.

Foreword

In the spring of 1970, when I was a student in my first year of graduate study at the University of British Columbia, Wilson Duff called me into his office and explained that it was time that I got out of the classroom and into the field. Through Mr. A. C. Milliken of Yale, B.C., he had recently heard of a person in Spuzzum who was an expert in Salish basketry. As I had completed a study of basketry in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia the previous year, he suggested that as a first exercise in field work I spend some time in Spuzzum, learning more.

Two weeks later he went with me to Spuzzum to meet Annie York. In the seven years that have elapsed since then much of my time for systematic field work has been spent in Yale, rather than Spuzzum, in other parts of British Columbia and in Alaska. But I have often gone back to Spuzzum. Over the years Miss York and I have spent some time discussing basketry, but we have also covered many other topics pertinent to the history of Spuzzum itself and the ethnography of the Lower Thompson people.

The following paper is the first systematic presentation of a part of her knowledge. Had it not been for Wilson Duff's initiative, his conscientiousness as a teacher, and the enthusiasm for all aspects of the ethnography of native Indian cultures in British Columbia that characterized his work through much of his life, it could never have been begun.

A.L.

Abstract

The following paper offers data on the winter dwelling of the Thompson Indian people, including native terms for structural features and descriptions of certain features not mentioned in the standard ethnographic accounts. Research with and by native people in the past few years has added to general knowledge of Salish winter dwellings. The notes below, based on the contributions of a Thompson Indian person, supplement the existing data and provide a Thompson perspective.

Descriptions of Interior Salish winter dwellings were first published by Boas and Dawson in 1890 and 1891 respectively, but the best-known ethnographic accounts of the dwellings of the Thompson, Shuswap, Lillooet and Okanagon were published by James Teit, a settler from the Shetland Islands who, under the direction of Franz Boas, conducted ethnographic work among most of the Interior Salish peoples at the turn of the century. Teit began with the Thompson (Teit, 1900). His home was in Thompson territory; he knew this culture best and his description of cultural characteristics of neighbouring Salish peoples was often a discussion of the ways in which they differed from the Thompson forms (cf. Teit, 1909:492).

Teit's bias was toward material culture, and his description of the Thompson semi-subterranean earth lodge, and the diagrams that accompanied it (Teit, 1900:192-195; figs. 135, 136) have served as the principal written source of information on this subject since 1900. More recently, work done by N. Condrashoff, J. Smyly and others of the staff of the British Columbia Provincial Museum (B.C.P.M.) in conjunction with Mr. Isaac Willard of the Shuswap community at Chase, B.C. has elucidated a number of features of the Shuswap house (Smyly, 1973; B.C.P.M. permanent exhibit *The Twelve Thousand Year Gap*). Further research on the structure of the Shuswap house has been done by members of the Thomas family, a Shuswap family of Salmon Arm, B.C., who consulted with elders of the family and their community in the course of constructing a replica of a winter house near Salmon Arm (Louis Thomas, pers. comm.). In a recently published paper on the ethnography of the Fraser River Lillooet, D. Kennedy and R. Bouchard have presented hitherto unpublished details on the construction and use of pithouses in that area (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1978:35-38). The following notes are intended as a supplement to Teit's description and to this more recent work. The information has been provided by Miss Annie York, of Spuzzum, B.C.

Miss York was born in Spuzzum, in former times the southernmost village of the Thompson people, in 1904. During her childhood she was strongly influenced by her father's parents and others of her grandparents' generation, who ensured that she was given a name in the Thompson tradition and that she understood and spoke the Thompson language. When she was a young adult, her father encouraged her to supplement her childhood knowledge of the language with formal lessons from elders in the Merritt area, where her family was living at that time. Throughout most of her adult life she has lived in Spuzzum in close association with the people of her parents' generation, and from them has learned much about traditional Thompson culture. During her life she has learned from people whose original homes were in the Thompson and Nicola River valleys; two maternal great-aunts were particularly important influences. However, the focus of much of her knowledge and experience is Spuzzum.

The Thompson term for the earth lodge is s?istkn (pl. s?as?istkn), from the word s?istk, meaning winter. People lived in these houses only for the three coldest months. During the balance of the year Thompson families lived in shelters constructed of a framework of poles covered with mats. There were several forms of these. The shape of a family's house depended on the size of the family and the area in which they lived.

s?as?istkn were in use in 1858, when Whites first arrived in Thompson territory in great numbers, and probably continued to be used for a number of years thereafter. Anglican missionaries who served the Upper Stalo and a portion of the Lower Thompson area from 1867 to 1873 recorded visits to them (Columbia Mission Annual Report, 1867:73; 1872:33). However, as White settlement became a fact, they were abandoned for log and wood-frame houses. By the 1890s they were no longer in use. The pole and mat shelters were not so quickly discarded. The native economy was altered by the coming of the Whites but not completely destroyed. Throughout the nineteenth century, fishing at family owned sites along the Fraser River and gathering vegetal foods in the mountains continued to be essential. Families still required temporary dwellings that did not take up much space.

The remains of several s?as?istkn can still be seen in Spuzzum and other areas of Thompson territory, and during Miss York's childhood they were even more common, with their characteristics less blurred by subsidence of the ground at their edges and the growth of vegetation. Miss York's paternal great-aunt, Rhoda Urquhart, had lived in a s?istkn in Spuzzum during her own early childhood, and shared her memories with Miss York. Temporary shelters used at fishing and gathering places were still being used during Miss York's childhood.

Teit has recorded that the size of the Thompson s?istkn varied according to the number of people who expected to live in it, and household size varied from fifteen to thirty people (Teit, 1900:192). Lillooet houses, "similar in all particulars to those of the Thompson people," varied from five to fifteen metres in diameter (Teit, 1906:213).

According to Teit's data, Thompson s?as?istkn were round. Miss York has confirmed this but notes that there was in Spuzzum a square-shaped depression. Her father's brother told her that it was the remnant of a s?istkn that existed in Spuzzum at the time of contact. This depression has since been destroyed in the course of construction. Square s?as?istkn were not unknown in Interior Salish territory as a whole. Teit (1906:213) has documented the existence of a few square-shaped houses among the Pemberton band of the Lillooet.

The data given by Miss York confirm Teit's description of the basic construction of the s?istkn and add several details. Miss York has provided Thompson terms for each of the parts of the dwelling.

Note: The pitch of the superstructure of some, or all, s?as?istkn may have been less steep than is implied by Teit's diagram. Both Lillooet (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1978:36) and Shuswap people (Smyly, 1973:51) have offered comments to this effect.

Figs. 1 and 2 after Teit 1900: Figs. 135, 136

Figs. 3 and 4 adapted from Teit 1900: Fig. 136

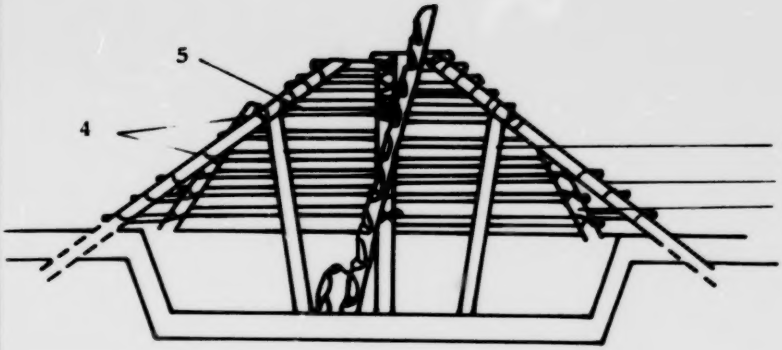


Figure 1.

1. sq̓ac̓mn (ƛ̓keʔmín)	The corner posts. These are the principal supports for the superstructure. They also define the family living areas. In a house of normal size there would be four sq̓ac̓mn; in a larger house, six.
2. ƛ̓kʷam̓mín	A long slanting rafter, embedded in the ground, intersecting with the top of the sq̓ac̓mn and defining the height and angle of the superstructure of the sʔistkn.
3. ƛ̓akʔéptn	A short slanting rafter that intersects with the top of the sqacmn and the ƛ̓kʷam̓mín.
4. stanwn	A rope or cable used to lash together the poles used to make the superstructure of the sʔistkn. The stanwn was made by twisting together willow withes[1] and lengths of honeysuckle[2] fibre. The joint at which the two poles were tied together was wrapped round with cherry bark for added strength.
5. ƛ̓ekʔéłxʷtn	The horizontal poles.

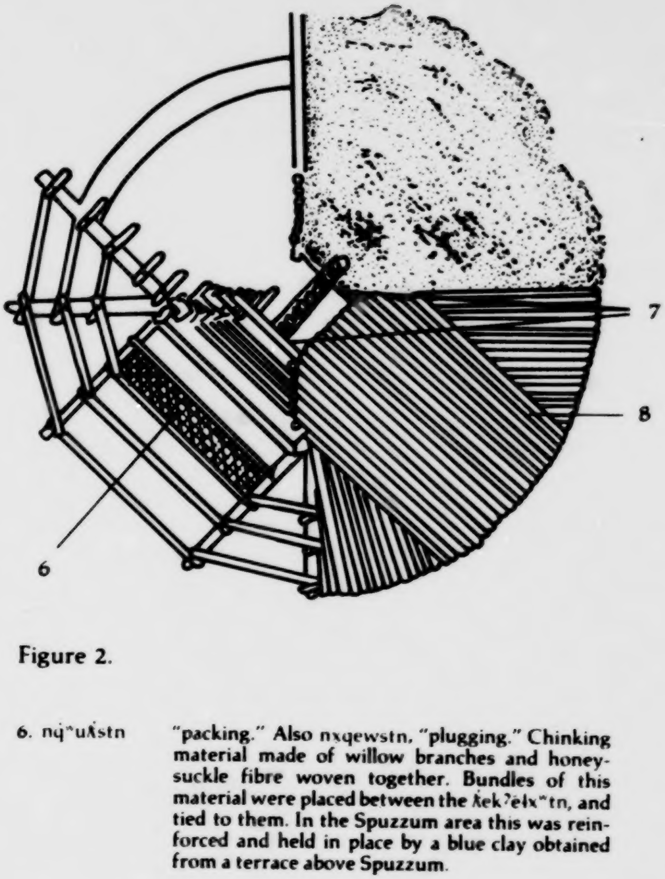


Figure 2.

6. nq̓ʷuƛ̓stn	"packing." Also nx̣qewstn, "plugging." Chinking material made of willow branches and honeysuckle fibre woven together. Bundles of this material were placed between the ƛ̓ekʔéłxʷtn, and tied to them. In the Spuzzum area this was reinforced and held in place by a blue clay obtained from a terrace above Spuzzum.
7. nc̓ulqinéłxʷtn	Short poles at the very top of the superstructure which outline the entrance at the top of the sʔistkn.
8. píx̣łxʷtn	Poles laid vertically onto the ƛ̓ekʔełxʷtn.

---

[1] Steedman, ed., 1930, p. 498. poxpoxElp; longleaf willow; Salix longifolia Muhl. "The stems, which are slender, tough, but pliable, are used as withes . . ." A more recent transcription and Latin name: púx̣ʷpax̣ʷełp; *Salix exigua* Nutt. Dr. Nancy Turner, personal communication.

[2] Steedman, ed., 1930, p. 499. .slopeiEk; honeysuckle; *Lonicera ciliosa* Poir. A fibre is obtained from the stems and is used as thread or twine. According to Miss York, ʔesƛ̓úpeyeqʷ is a general term meaning "twisted." The more exact term for orange honeysuckle is q̓ac̓q̓ac̓usnínus, the root word being q̓ac̓, "to weave." Dr. N. Turner, personal communication.

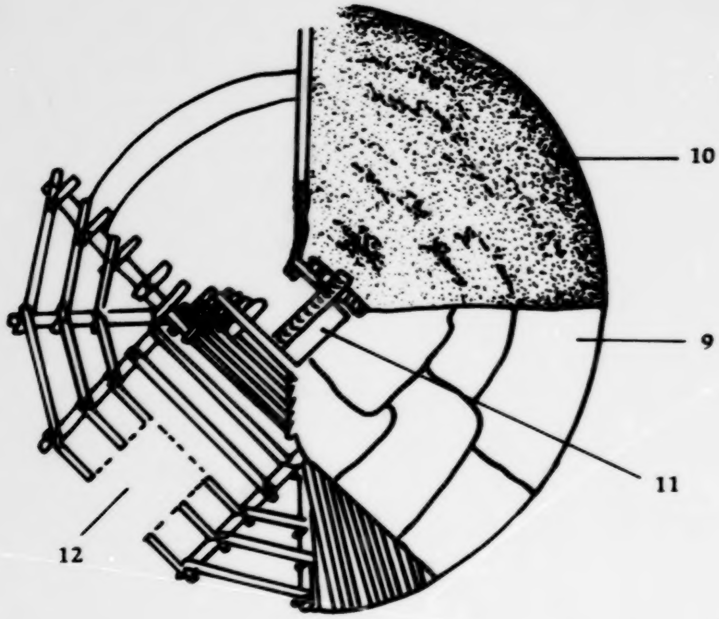
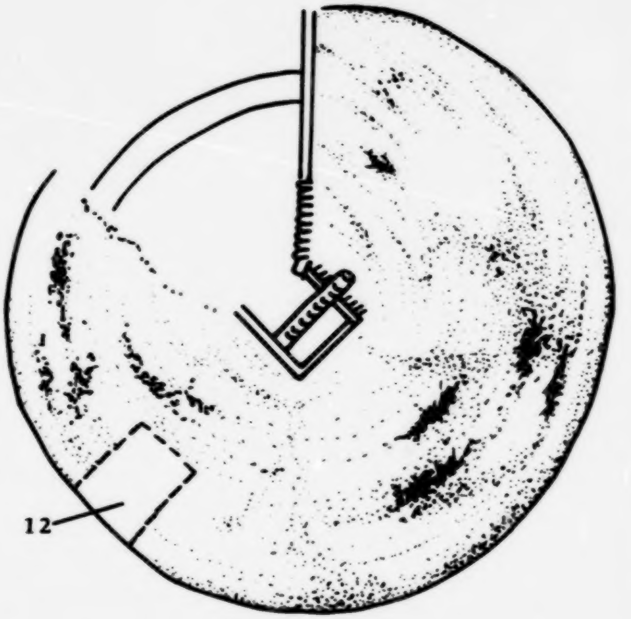


Figure 3.



9.	ziʔxʷéɬxʷtn (xʔeɬxʷtn) (xneɬxʷtn) (pteɬx̣ʷtn) (xnikntn)	Cedar bark covering laid on top of the pix̣ɬxʷtn. People living in the Upper Thompson country used birch bark or cottonwood bark.
10.	yiq̓ɬxʷtn	Earth placed on top of the sʔistkn.
11.	nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn	Entrance hole at the top of the sʔistkn.
12.	ntəqcíntn	Side entrance used by women.

Figure 4.

The top of the sˀistkn generally was referred to as sˀéɬxʷ. Miss York has also referred to layers of cedar bark placed on top of the yiq̇ɬxʷtn so that when the snow was swept away in winter the yiq̇ɬxʷtn would remain intact.

In stormy weather the entrance hole at the top of the sˀistkn was protected by the nq̇ażqinéɬxʷtn, a sheet of woven stənwn covered with bark and held together with split sticks. This was supported by four poles. Two of these poles were approximately three to four feet high; the other two were shorter, so that the mat was always on a slant. It was possible to reverse the direction of the slant, and thus divert wind, snow, and rain from the nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn. In calmer weather people placed an openwork mat of woven sticks over the smokehole. This gave some protection but allowed for ventilation. It was called nqətqinéɬxʷtn.

Teit did not describe the chinking material between the ƛ̇ekˀéɬxʷtn, or either variety of smokehole cover. However, the principal feature of the sˀistkn that he omitted from his description was the ntəqćintn, a door fitted into the superstructure of the building and used exclusively by women. Only men and older women who had passed through the menopause used the nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn, and even those older women who did use it wrapped their skirt securely around them before going up the ladder.

The seclusion of women at the time of the first menses and during menstrual periods throughout their adult lives was a custom strictly observed among the Thompson and other Interior Salish peoples. Equipment and clothing used by both men and women in expeditions away from the village were carefully protected from the touch of a woman who was menstruating. It was universally accepted that animals, particularly bears, would be offended if approached by a person wearing clothing or carrying equipment that had been in contact with a menstruating woman, and that hunting devices contaminated in this way would be ineffective.

At all times women observed certain restrictions with regard to animals: they did not pass in front of the head of a deer, mountain goat, or bear, and they did not eat the head, heart, or kidneys, of a deer or other large animal (Teit, 1900:326-27). The doors of summer shelters were placed in such a way that women going out for water would not have to pass by the heads of other people as they were sleeping. It is not surprising that similar provision was made in the construction of the sˀistkn. It is surprising that Teit omitted it. It may be that his informants were reluctant to discuss such matters with him at the time he was gathering information about the construction of the sˀistkn. In any case it is not an isolated characteristic common only to the Thompson sˀistkn. Shuswap women also used a separate door (N. Condrashoff, pers. comm.)[3]

The ntəqćintn was set into the wall of the sˀistkn at ground level, and followed the angle of the wall. The actual floor of the sˀistkn was well below ground level and, on the inside, steps led from the floor to the doorway. The door itself was a sheet of woven stənwn, covered with bark and held together by split sticks pinched together at either end, and along each side. It was attached to the ƛ̇kʷəṁmin or ƛ̇əkˀéptn with ropes or cord that served as hinges, as in a European-style door.[4] The ntəqćintn could be wedged shut with a pole in cold weather, and the doorway could be protected further from the inside with a piece of goat-wool blanket. When it was snowing, people stretched a sheet of bark out from the top of the doorway to the tops of two poles set into the ground a few feet out from the doorway, to form a sort of awning.

Inside the sˀistkn the living spaces were defined by the sq̇aćmn and the x̣nuxʷ, the notched-log ladder placed in the centre of the dwelling and serving as a ladder from the floor (ncekʷtn) to the nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn. The ends of both the sq̇aćmn and x̣nuxʷ were inserted in the ground and they were held in place with rocks called k̓ˀeptn.

Most sˀəsˀistkn had a single ladder that allowed people to leave or enter through the nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn. In discussing a very large sˀistkn that existed at one time on the mountain side above Spuzzum, Miss York commented that a sˀistkn of this size—it was perhaps twice as large as others in Spuzzum and was designed to accommodate several families—would have had a nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn divided into two parts, with a notched ladder in each. Teit (1906:213) has noted a similar practice for the Lake band of the Lillooet. There are no data as to what, if any, consequences the existence of two ladders had for the organization of living space within the sˀistkn.

In houses with a single ladder, the area on the side of the ladder without notches, sqʷətéyqʷ, "on the other side," was a storage area for bundles of pitchwood and kindling needed to maintain the fire, and for cooking utensils, which, when not being used, were hung up out of the way. All of the families living in the sˀistkn kept their cooking utensils in this space.

All cooking was done at a single fire, sṗems, set near the ladder. A rock, k̓ˀustn, was placed between the ladder and the fire to keep the ladder from being burned. A single small fire served for both cooking and heat. The sʔistkn retained heat well and was generally very warm.

---

[3] The use of round, subterranean, earth lodges with side entrances has been documented for plateau peoples living in what is now Washington State (Ray 1939:135-36). However, in these cases the side entrance appears to have been substituted for the central entrance. According to the literature, a single house had one type of entrance or another, not both.

[4] This hinge may have been a feature adopted in the early years of White settlement and not necessarily characteristic of traditional sˀəsˀistkn.

The living area for a single nuclear family was the sqʷʔén̓i, "corner." This term could be used to denote "triangle" or the place where two walls met to form a V, or its meaning could expand to denote the roughly triangular section of the sʔistkn defined by the sq̓ac̓mn, the wall of the sʔistkn, and the partitions that separated one sqʷʔén̓i from the others, in which a single family slept.

The earthen part of the sʔistkn walls were covered with a lining, nkəmtəm, consisting of slabs of birch and cedar bark held flat against the walls with poles, or woven cedar splints. The sqʷʔén̓i were partitioned or closed off from one another with sewn rush mats, sɬk̓ʷeytxʷ. Within the sʔistkn piles of folded sɬk̓ʷeytxʷ served as seats for guests, but the principal furnishing was the qʷásaʔqʷ, or sleeping platform. This was approximately 18 to 24 inches high, and was constructed of a framework of poles of lodgepole pine. Two vertical poles of equal height were set up at one end, and two more at the other. The framework was completed by four poles connecting the vertical poles and forming sides. The ends of these were set into holes made near the top of the vertical poles. The bed was completed with peeled poles laid over this frame and covered with a mattress of sleeping mats (sey̓epʔúy) and pine needles. A sey̓epʔúy was placed on top of the poles, a layer of pine needles covered it, and a second sey̓epʔúy covered the pine needles. Some people sewed the two mats together to keep the pine needles inside. On top of this mattress was placed a deer skin blanket tanned from one side only (nékʷe), and people slept on this. A second nékʷe covered them. Wealthy people who owned a large enough mountain goat wool blanket (snaʔz) would put it on top of the sey̓epʔúy, so that only one half was covering the mattress, and fold the other half up over them.

The term sk̓eʔqín referred to any of the types of pillow in use: folded snaʔz, folded buckskin, or sey̓epʔúy filled with conifer needles. Teit (1900:199) states that pillows were the rolled-up ends of grass mattresses or skin bags filled with the down of birds or bulrushes. Poor people, particularly those past childbearing age, used folded rabbit skins. A belief that association with rabbits could cause a harelip inhibited pregnant women from using them.

The qʷásaʔqʷ could be dismantled and put together again quickly. They were used even after people stopped living in sʔasʔistkn. Annie York's family slept on them when they lived in various construction camps when she was a child. Although the qʷásaʔqʷ was the main item of furniture within the sʔistkn, it was possible for families to sleep on boughs placed directly on the floor. These, however, dried out very quickly and had to be changed frequently.

A qʷásaʔqʷ was placed behind each sq̓ac̓mn; more were placed around the walls between if they were needed. Grown women slept with female children who had not yet reached puberty; men slept with male children apart from the women. Young children often slept with grandparents. Menstruating women and adolescent girls did not sleep in the family sʔistkn at all, but in a separate sʔistkn for which there was no special term. Adolescent boys who were in training up in the hills were also often away at night, but they may not have stayed away during the severe part of the winter.

Within the sʔistkn space for storage was made with a few simple devices. In every sqʷʔén̓i there was a rack for storing the family's food, ʔesx̣áz tək xiy̓epéyus. This was a tray constructed of sticks and hung by a cord at either end. Dried food that was to be used relatively quickly was stored on it. Water was fetched and stored in a sqəwáqeɬ, a basket with a straight back, slanting sides and a slanting top, somewhat in the shape of a fishing creel. Water was never kept under the ladder, but was stored in between the corner sleeping areas. Bulky textiles, like snaʔz and sey̓epʔúy, were rolled up and kept suspended between nɬx̣ʷáqstn, hooked portions of branches that were attached to the ƛekʔéɬxʷtn. Clothing was hung from small hooks of maple or dogwood attached to the slanting rafters (ƛ̓kʷəm̓mín), or from strings stretched between them.

Teit's drawings (Figs. 1 and 2) and information more recently contributed by Shuswap people (Smyly, 1973:50) indicate the existence of an earthen bench. This was simply the area between the ƛ̓kʷəm̓mín and the excavated part of the sʔistkn. According to the Shuswap people, it was used for storage. Miss York does not recall such a bench; it may not have been a prominent feature of the Thompson sʔistkn. Fraser River Lillooet people constructed a sleeping platform around the circumference of the house (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1978:36). As material could be stored underneath it, this seems to have been more nearly equivalent to the Thompson qʷásaʔqʷ than to the earthen bench in the Shuswap house. In Lillooet houses, also, an additional storage shelf was built above the sleeping platform near the level of the ground surface (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1978:loc.cit.).

Not everything used by the people living in the Thompson sʔistkn was stored in the sʔistkn itself. Dishes, spoons, and other household utensils that were not used for ordinary everyday meals were kept in a summer shelter and brought out when they were needed for a feast. Firewood was piled outside the house and protected by a sq̓až̓qn, a roof supported by four poles.

Cured foods were stored outside the sˀistkn in npwentn (storage pits) and p̓áq̓ʷeɬ (boxes placed in trees). The cedar baskets that women made during the winter for storing cured foods during the forthcoming seasons were hung in the summer homes, since they were not to be used for several months.

People living in sˀəsˀistkn were vulnerable to attack from other groups, but there were features built into the structure that provided some protection. There was a pliable ladder, constructed of willow and honeysuckle boughs twisted together, that led from the top of the sˀistkn down to the ground outside, and allowed a person to leave the house by the nx̣ətqinéɬxʷtn without slipping on the surface of the roof. The ladder could easily be rolled up and taken inside if an attack were expected.

There was also a tunnel, nɬəx̣ʷptə́n, built for escape in case of an attack or fire. In the vicinity of Spuzzum few sˀəsˀistkn had these, but upcountry they were much more common. The tunnels were lined with poles so that the dirt from the walls and ceiling would not fill them in. A tunnel extended for a number of yards beyond the sˀistkn.

The floor of the sˀistkn was spread with fir boughs, and the renewing of these was a matter of routine maintenance. Old dry boughs from the floor were bundled up in a seẏepˀúy and hauled through the smokehole by women standing at the top of the sˀistkn. Stray needles from the boughs were swept up with a broom of twigs. Water was sprinkled first to make the floor hard and the sweeping easier.

The sˀistkn was refurbished each year in the fall. During the months when it was unoccupied there was generally some subsidence of the earthen walls. In the fall women swept out the inside, smoothed the walls and repaired or renewed the bark lining. They burned juniper inside to freshen the air. This was the extent of the refurbishing in the Spuzzum area. However, Miss York maintains that upcountry, particularly in areas where there were venomous snakes that chose to rest in secluded dark places, the log and earth superstructure was completely taken apart and rebuilt each year.[5] In these areas the woven material that filled the spaces between the horizontal rafters was not reinforced with clay, so that the structure was fairly easily dismantled.

Miss York's great-aunt, Rhoda Urquhart, who lived at Spuzzum, with some brief interruptions, throughout her life, remembered the furnishings of the sˀistkn and the family sleeping corner enclosed by mats. She remembered long qʷə́saˀqʷ with the mattress of lodgepole pine needles where the whole family slept. She also remembered the birch bark basket with seams sealed with pitch that children used as a urinal. Every family sleeping place had one.

She recalled aspects of household routine, the old women gathering up the boughs that were spread on the floor early in the morning, and taking them out and replacing them with fresh ones. She could remember the women cooking meals in big cast-iron pots and a frying pan with a long handle. Even in her childhood in the late 1870s and early 1880s the traditional cooking basket was passing out of use. The family spread mats on the floor and sat on the floor to eat. At that time, everybody still used wooden spoons for eating.

People bathed early in the morning. Rhoda Urquhart said that her grandmother had a large basket that was used as a bathtub. No one bathed inside the sˀistkn. There was a special place to bathe down by the creek, where there was a slant-roofed shelter enclosed on three sides. A large fire was built there. Rocks heated in this fire were dropped into the water in the basket. When the water was warm, a small basket was used to dip it from the large basket. Mothers washed their children in this way. People bathed year round, winter and summer. There were separate places, each protected by a sq̓aẑqn, for men and women to bathe. In or near the sˀistkn people kept a paddle-like snow shovel to sweep the snow off the path to the creek.

Conclusion

Detailed references to the sˀistkn are scarce in the records left by the explorers, missionaries, fur traders, and gold miners who were among the first White visitors to the area. Teit's description includes material on the techniques of construction and the co-operation of people who came together to build a house. None of the literature offers direct testimony about life in such a dwelling from one who had actually experienced it. These data and reminiscences, coming as they do at least two generations after the Thompson people adopted European houses and filtered through the memories of people whose own experiences have been very different, give a glimpse of the physical circumstances of life in the sˀistkn.

---

[5] In contrast, Louis Thomas has commented that after a few seasons, if the earth layer was undisturbed, plants grew in it, and, in addition to making the sˀistkn less visible, reinforced the solidity of the structure. Lillooet people have spoken of placing the contents of an anthill around the entrance to inhibit infestation (Kennedy and Bouchard, 1978:37).

References

Boas, Franz

1890 The Shushwap. In British Association for the Advancement of Science Sixth Report on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada. 1:80-95.

Columbia Mission

1867 Annual Report. Rivingtons. London.

1872 Annual Report. Rivingtons. London.

Dawson, George

1891 Notes on the Shuswap People of British Columbia. Royal Society of Canada. Proceedings and Transactions. 9, 2:3-44.

Kennedy, Dorothy I. D. and Randy Bouchard

1978 Fraser River Lillooet: An Ethnographic Summary. In, Reports of the Lillooet Archeological Project, No. 1, Introduction and Setting. Arnoud H. Stryd and Stephen Lawhead, eds. National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Arch. Survey of Canada Paper No. 73. Ottawa.

Ray, V. F.

1939 Cultural Relations in the Plateau of North-Western America. Publications of The Frederick Webb Hodge Anniversary Publication Fund, Vol. 3, Los Angeles, Southwest Museum.

Smyly, John

1973 The Shuswap Kekuli. The Beaver. Outfit 303, 4:49-51.

Teit, James

1900 The Thompson Indians of British Columbia. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History. Vol. 2, part 4. New York.

1906 The Lillooet Indians. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History. Vol. 4, part 5. New York.

1909 The Shuswap. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History. Vol. 4, part 7. The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. New York.

1912 Mythology of the Thompson Indians. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History. Vol. 12, part 2. New York.

The following paper by Wilson Duff has never before been published although it was written in 1963 and presented orally to the 16th Northwest Anthropological Conference. Wilson might not have agreed to its publication in this form since the data on which it is based have been considerably supplemented and modified by new research. Still, even though unpublished it has been rather frequently referred to and cited since it is the pioneering effort in the field. Wilson appears to have been the first to recognize and discuss the implications of post-pleistocene sea level changes for the archaeological data base on the coast. It is a historically significant work and is printed here for that reason to make it more readily accessible to other scholars.

D.N.A.

Sea Levels and Archaeology on the Northwest Coast

Wilson Duff

The main idea I want to present in this paper[1] is that much, if not most, of the material evidence of man's occupation of the Northwest Coast has probably been washed away. But before I get to that, I have to establish two other, related ideas. The first is that the long coastal zone of British Columbia and southeastern Alaska can only have been occupied effectively by people with fairly well-developed maritime cultures. The second is that the habitation sites of such people tend to rest in a very sensitive relationship with the sea level of the time.

The Northwest Coast is no simple or gentle meeting of the continent and the ocean. They meet first in the shadows of the summits of the Coast Range, and sea and rockbluff hold each other intertwined along a zone that is a hundred miles or more in width. In cross section this coastal zone is shaped rather like a trough, its outer rim the mountains of Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes, its bottom the low islands and sheltered waterways of the Inland Passage, and its high and forbidding eastern rim the crest of the Coast Mountains. In a few places the eastern rim is pierced by rivers cutting through from the plateaus behind the mountains, and their deep valleys provide routes, more or less tortuous, from the interior to the coast. But to early people who travelled only by land and on foot it would have been of little avail to follow these routes to saltwater, because once there they would find their movements so restricted by the maze of mountains and fiords as to make permanent occupation practically impossible. To maritime people, with the mobility provided by seaworthy canoes and the skills to use them, the coastal zone offered one of the richest habitats ever enjoyed by man. But walking people with land-based cultures could scarcely survive there.

One area stands out as a probable, and very significant, exception to this general rule. The lowland, which includes the Fraser Delta and extends south along Puget Sound, may well have been the only part of the coast where land-oriented hunters and fishermen, with no skills at utilizing the resources of the sea, may nevertheless have been able to inhabit lands along the saltwater margins. This area is regarded as a likely place to find traces of cultures in transition from a land-based to a maritime orientation.

The principal habitation sites of sea-oriented people tend to lie in a very sensitive relationship to sea level, expecially on this coast, where the steep terrain and large tidal range limit the choice of suitable sites. Most villages were located on sloping beaches which offered both a suitable landing place for the canoes and a flat but dry foundation for the houses. Beaches too flat and too steep were alike avoided. Most villages rested on ground from 5 to 20 feet above high tide. In most cases a rise in sea level of 10 feet would render the site uninhabitable, if not erase the evidence that it had been occupied. That such was generally the case for the coastal villages of historic times may be confirmed by examining old photographs, and there seems to be no compelling reason to suppose that the same preference in sites was not shown by maritime peoples of the past. Of course one can point to several recent sites located on terraces or high rocky points or islets, as exceptions to the general rule.

These occur only on certain kinds of terrain. For example they occur at rivermouths, where it was necessary to locate the village high on the bank to be out of reach of the annual floods. Presumably, similar exceptions also occurred in the past, and presumably these are the sites that are most likely to have survived any subsequent rise in sea level which flooded more typical sites of the same age.

The effect of a rise in sea level on old habitation sites may be readily observed at the present time, because the sea level is now rising and many shellmounds along the shore are being actively eroded away by the surf. Where this is the case, as at the Canal site on Pender Island, the inference is that the site was established at a time when the sea level was lower than now. In some places, as at the Maplebank site in Victoria, it is not only the site itself which is eroding away, but the subsoil on which it rests.

---

[1] Paper read at the 16th Northwestern Anthropological Conference, Portland, Oregon, April 26, 1963.

Changes in the level of the sea and of the land are of three main kinds. The world-wide rise in the level of the oceans when water flows into them from melting glacial ice sheets, and its fall again when the glaciers form again on the continents, are *eustatic* changes. The elastic "rebound" of the land when it is relieved of the weight of glacial ice, and its depression under a new glaciation, are *isostatic* changes. While eustatic changes are uniform around the world, isostatic changes vary in magnitude from place to place *depending on the thickness of the burden of ice.* Other local warpings and faultings in the earth's crust, many of which are associated with vulcanism and earthquake activity, are types of *tectonic* changes. These may have had some local effects on the coast of British Columbia, and seem to have been a very important factor on the coast of Alaska.

Figure 1 shows the *eustatic* changes in ocean levels which have taken place during the last 12,000 years, according to R. W. Fairbridge (1961). When the Pleistocene glaciation was at its maximum, sea level was at least 300 feet lower than it is at present. By 12,000 years ago it had risen to about 150 feet below the present, and about 6000 years ago it reached its present level. It continued to rise, and about 5000 years ago stood 10 feet higher than at present. Since then it has experienced three major fluctuations ranging from 10 feet below the present level to 10 feet above. Other geologists agree on the main trends of the curve but differ on details.

Observations made on this coast confirm Fairbridge's curve in some respects and modify it in others. The recent discovery at Port Mann near the mouth of the Fraser of a layer of peat about 42 feet below present sea level and 7300 years old (Armstrong, pers. comm.) is especially significant, because it fits the curve nicely and confirms the lower sea level of the time. Another peat sample from Whidbey Island and two more from Oregon, reported by Heusser (1960), give approximately the same sort of confirmation.

Other observations seem to indicate that the highest level of the sea was above the 10 feet above present shown on the Fairbridge curve. A well-defined beach line which encircles the Queen Charlotte Islands and is considered to mark the post-glacial eustatic high is now found at an elevation of 20-25 feet. The highest level seems to have been reached about 5000 years ago, at which time salt water invaded certain coastal lakes, turning them into saltwater lagoons. This is revealed by peat profiles from Devil's Lake and Garrison Lake in Oregon (Heusser, 1960, p. 98). Coming to more recent centuries, it would seem that the sea level has risen more than is shown by Fairbridge, judging from the active erosion which is now destroying many shellmounds along the shore.

Figure 2 shows the archaeological implications of these eustatic sea level changes over the past 8000 years. For any given locality these of course apply only to the degree that it was free of isostatic and tectonic changes during this period; however, it seems clear that for most parts of the coast the eustatic changes have been the dominant ones for at least the past 7000 years. I have also indicated a 10-foot band above the sea level of the time, within which a large proportion of the sites would presumably be located. It would appear that sites over 6000 years of age, if such existed, may well have been drowned or washed away by the surf as the ocean level rose. To be out of reach of the subsequent eustatic rise, a 7000 year old site would have originally been established more than 40 feet, and an 8000 year old site more than 75 feet, above the sea level of the time. We can hardly expect that many such sites did exist; those that did would be atypical sites, on steep terrain, and difficult to find now. As for sites younger than 6000 years, the proportion of these which have been destroyed is shown approximately by the amount of the ten-foot band in the shaded areas of the chart.

The second type of change, the *isostatic* rise or "glacial rebound" of the land, was of greater magnitude, more rapid, and more local in its effects than was eustatic change, but it had probably run its course on most parts of the coast by 7000 or more years ago. In the 15,000 years since the glaciers of the Pleistocene began to wane, the land along the coast has risen 750 feet or more near Vancouver, more than 500 feet near Juneau, and as much as 1700 feet at Lituya Bay, Alaska (Heusser, 1960, p. 5). This rebound is thought to have occurred as a fairly immediate and sensitive response to the removal of the burden of the glacial ice. It was of greatest magnitude near the axis of the Coast Mountains, declining to almost no rise at all on the outer islands.

Figure 3 shows the effect of the isostatic rise of the lower Fraser Valley. This area was invaded from the east less than 11,500 years ago by the last of the Pleistocene glacial advances, the Sumas glaciation. This ice load depressed the land at least 500 feet below the level of the sea at the time (that is, the sea stood at least 500 feet higher on the land). With the wasting of the Sumas ice the land emerged (the local sea level fell) somewhat as shown on the chart. That the rebound was complete by 7300 years ago is indicated by the peat sample at Port Mann, mentioned earlier, which seems to fit on the eustatic curve (Armstrong, 1961, p. 24 and pers. comm.). Therefore the isostatic rebound of this locality between about 11,000

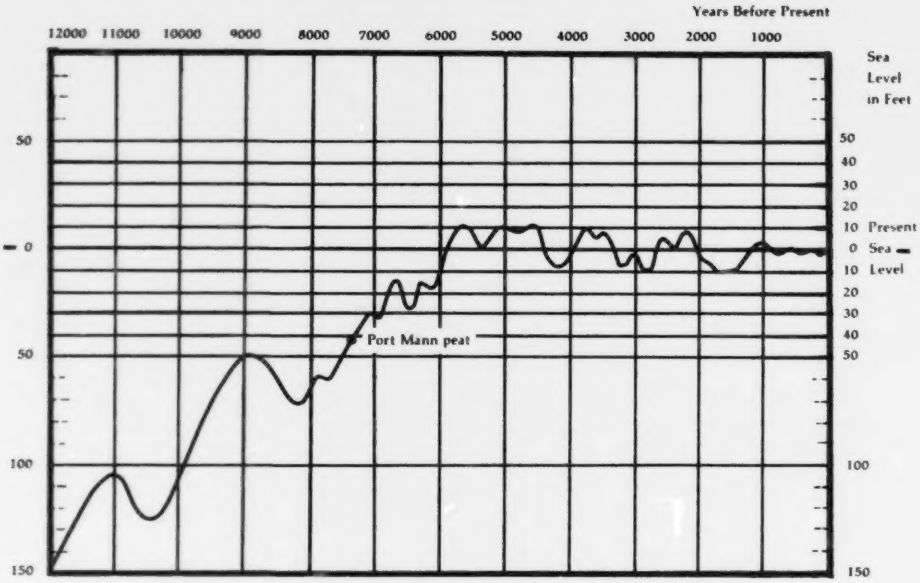


Figure A: Eustatic Curve (Fairbridge)

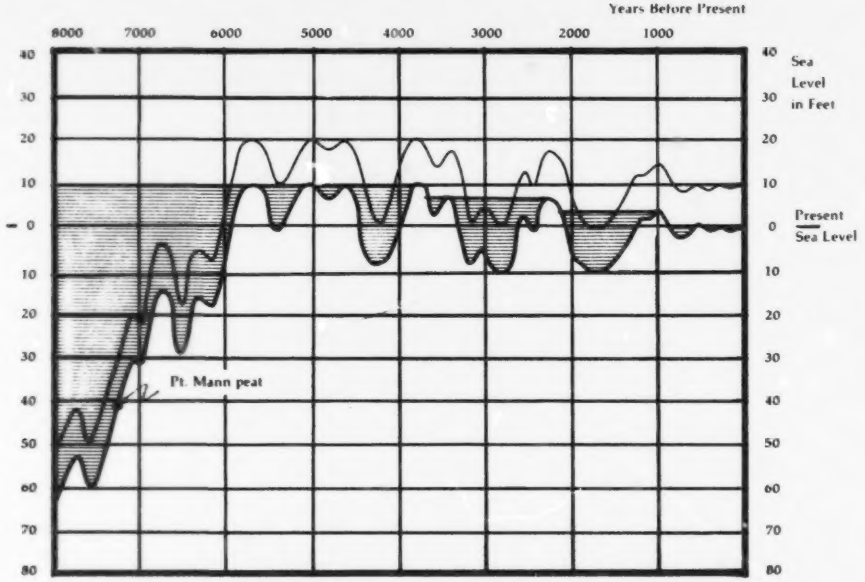


Figure B: Effects of Eustatic Variations upon sites within ten feet of Sea Level

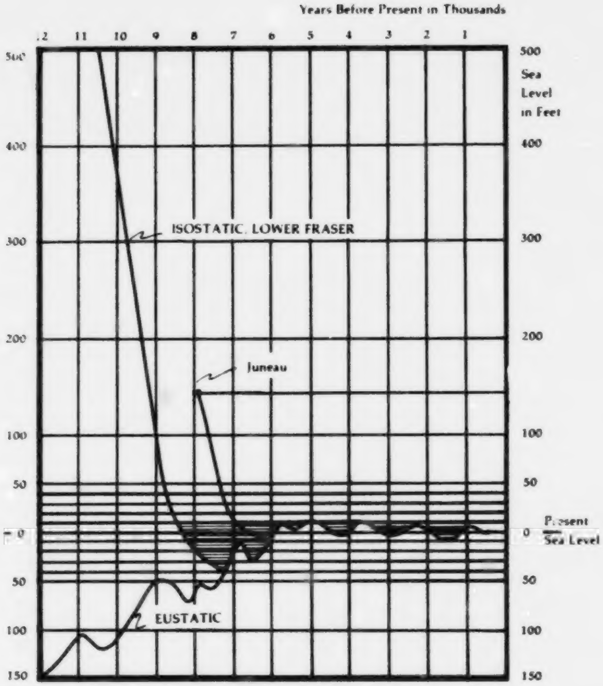


Figure C: Effects of Isostatic Rise

and 7000 years ago was of the order of 600 feet. If the diagram represents the situation correctly, coastal sites in this vicinity of an age greater than about 8000 years may have survived the subsequent eustatic rise. For example, a site which was on the beach 9000 years ago would be found near the present 100 foot contour. However, beach sites between about 6000 and 8500 years old will have been inundated.

In other localities along the mainland coast where isostatic rebound was similarly large, ancient coastal sites may likewise have been spared the effects of the eustatic rise in sea level. A separate isostatic curve would have to be drawn on the diagram for each locality; for example, I have shown the rise of 150 feet in the vicinity of Juneau between 7800 and 6100 years ago reported by Heusser (1960, p. 192). A site which was on the beach there 7800 years ago would be found near the present 140 foot contour. For most parts of the coastal zone, however, it seems unlikely that isostatic rise was large enough or recent enough to uplift any archaeological sites beyond the reach of the subsequent eustatic rise. For most parts, that is to say, it is the eustatic rise and fall that has had the greatest effect on archaeological remains.

We sometimes speak of archaeological remains as a book, which we can read page by page using the techniques of scientific archaeology. For the Northwest Coast our book is incomplete; the first chapters have probably been torn out, and handfuls of pages of later chapters as well. We shall have to be very careful in how we interpret the pages that remain. For example we may find small inland hunting camps of the people of 7000 years ago but not their village sites, which have since been drowned; and be tempted to postulate from this the existence of a land-oriented hunting culture. Or again, in plotting early trait distributions we may find apparent absences on the coast where the trait had actually been present. The absences we find may not always be significant absences, because most archaeological remains over 6000 years, and perhaps half of those of a lesser age, have been washed away.

References

Armstrong, J. E.

1961 Soils of the Coastal Area of Southwest British Columbia. *Geological Survey of Canada, Reprint* 28. Reprinted from: Soils in Canada. *The Royal Society of Canada, Special Publications,* No. 3.

Fairbridge, R. W.

1961 Eustatic Changes in Sea Level. In Ahrens, L. H., *et al., Physics and Chemistry of the Earth,* Vol. 4.

Heusser, C. J.

1960 Late-Pleistocene Environments of the North Pacific North America. *American Geographical Society, Special Publication,* No. 35. New York.

Salwen, Bert

1962 Sea Levels and Archaeology in the Long Island Sound Area. *American Antiquity,* Vol. 28, No. 1, July, pp. 46-55.

Bedrock and Boulder Bowls

Beth Hill

Illustrations by author unless otherwise indicated

Two years ago, wandering on the beach at Browning Harbour (Pender Island) at low tide, I came upon a large boulder containing a bowl-like depression filled with sea water. Idly pausing to examine this, I was suddenly alert and astounded, realizing that the bowl was *not* natural! I stroked the smooth surface of the bowl, contrasted its abraded polish with the rough adjacent surface of the basalt boulder. Splashing out the sea water, I dried the bowl, photographed it, felt how the smooth surface flowed over the rim, observed that it was slightly oval and that there was one place to stand beside the boulder so that abrading motions were comfortable. I asked myself what had been ground in this bowl. Why was such a bowl laboriously shaped in a dense boulder too large to move, a bowl so inconveniently between tide-lines and therefore unusable whenever the tide came in? Was this a unique object? I began to think and ask about boulder bowls and gradually I assembled a list of 26 sites. Some of the bowls have been previously noted in various reports; the rest, though plainly visible, have either not been recorded by archaeologists or have been removed to private gardens and so hidden from academic view. This report is the first attempt to bring together information on the known bedrock and boulder bowls in northwestern North America.

The study area extends from the Columbia River to the Venn Passage at Prince Rupert. I feel somewhat surprised by the large number of sites listed in this paper, and hope that the publication of these somewhat tentative and uncertain observations will stimulate a discussion of the significance and further distribution of boulder and bedrock bowls.

Are these bowls truly artifacts? After examining the Degnen Bay bowls, Hilary Stewart wrote to me. "In my opinion, based on the many stone mortars and bowls I have handled, the extreme smoothness inside the bowls is the result of deliberate, and lengthy, abrasion. This may be caused either through constant use, such as in grinding pigment, grinding burnt clamshells for making a while paint, or grinding and pounding root foods. It could also be purposefully ground down with an abrader" (Stewart, pers. comm.). Such smoothness of the inner surface of the bowl, contrasting with the surface of the boulder or bedrock, may be observed in 12 of the bowls. Another is included because its pecked rim is not natural. Twelve are either integrated with a petroglyph design or associated with rock art sites. Some are doubtful. Is the petroglyph head of the Man-who-fell-from-Heaven at the Venn Passage meant to serve also as a bowl? It is not certain that the depression associated with the petroglyph figure at Englishman River is not natural. Certainly most of the bowls in this list are artifacts and the others appear to be artifacts. I have not been able to examine three of the sites of the Columbia River, nor has it been possible to revisit some remote coastal sites to re-examine them.

Edward Meade was among the first to note the bedrock and boulder bowls. He wrote that "at certain sites, at Nanaimo, Cape Mudge, and Meadow Island at Bella Bella, and in Washington, ceremonial bowls and rounded cups, carved in the solid rock, are to be found with the petroglyphs" (Meade, 1971:11). This paper omits the configuration at Petroglyph Park in Nanaimo, because it is on a sloping rock surface, cannot hold either liquids or solids and is therefore not a bowl. Included are the other three mentioned by Meade and 23 other sites have been added.

In distribution, the bowls fall into four widely separated groups, although the discontinuities may disappear when other sites are found. The dominance of the Gulf of Georgia region may simply reflect the activities of the author, or it is possible that making and using such bowls may be predominantly an activity of peoples living in what is now Salish territory.

Descriptive List of the Bowls

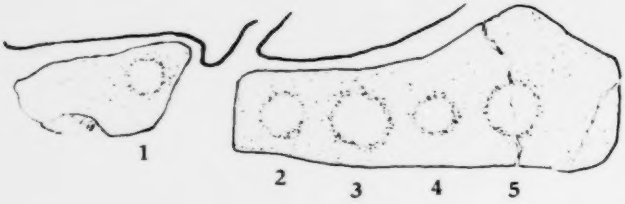
COLUMBIA RIVER

1. *Tsigaglalal bowls,* Horsethief Lake State Park, Columbia River, Washington, 45 KL 5. The ochre-rubbed face of the petroglyph Tsigaglalal, "She who watches," may be seen on the cliff directly above the ancient village of Wishram, above the relocated railroad track, about a third of a mile west of Wakemap Mound. Although almost all the petroglyphs and pictographs of The Dalles region have been destroyed or submerged by dam construction, the high location of this petroglyph has preserved it. Tsigaglalal looks down on what was once one of the best fishing sites on the continent, where a catch of 42,000,000 salmon was recorded in 1883. It is estimated that before the smallpox, malaria and measles brought by the Europeans destroyed about 80% of the Indian people, there were approximately 50,000 Indians living in the area, a dense population. The fishing season attracted thousands more from both the coast and interior to the region of the Long Narrows where the great river foamed through a twelve-mile gorge and the salmon could be easily speared or netted as they rested in pools and eddies.

Near Tsigaglalal there are bedrock mortars at two locations (R. McClure, pers. comm.). At location (A), a short distance north of the petroglyph face, on the shore of a seasonal pond, are two bowls, the smaller apparently covered by water for much of the year, but the larger bowl above the pond water level and overgrown with lichen. No. 1 shows the smaller bowl at location (A).

Further to the east is location (B), a second group of bedrock basalt mortars close to the main Park road and adjacent to a trail leading to the petroglyph. The sketch shows the arrangement of bowls at location (B), the mortars numbered for the purpose of giving diameters:

1. 8 cm diameter	3 cm depth
2. 9 cm "	4 cm "
3. 10.5 cm "	6 cm "
4. 6.5 cm "	2 cm "
5. 8 cm "	4 cm "

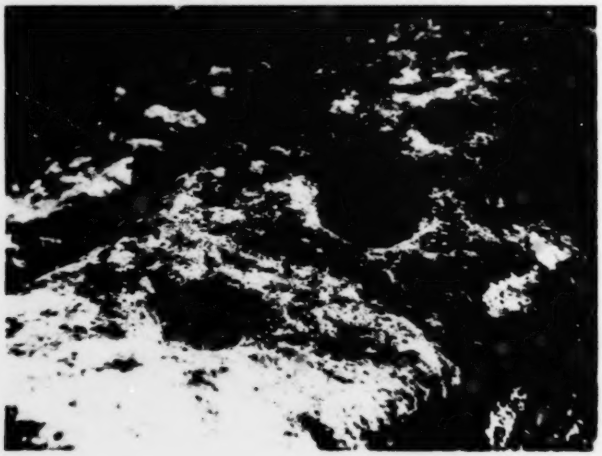


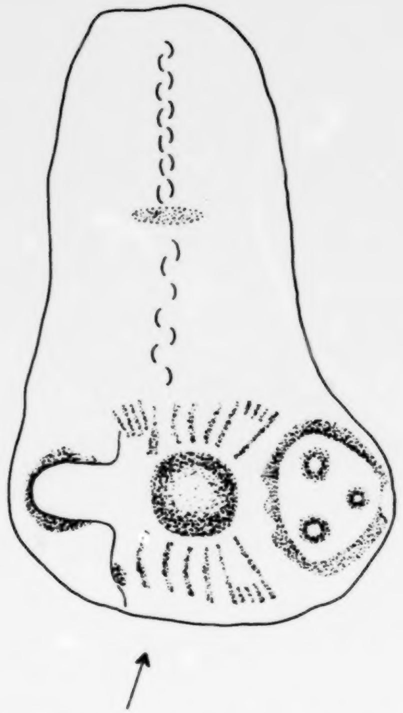
Sketch by R. McClure

No evidence of paint or pigment was found in any of these bowls, although the reddened surface of the Tsigaglalal petroglyph demonstrates that ochre was used, possibly seasonally.

1.(A)

1.(B)





Drawing and photograph: Malcolm Loring, Portland, Ore.

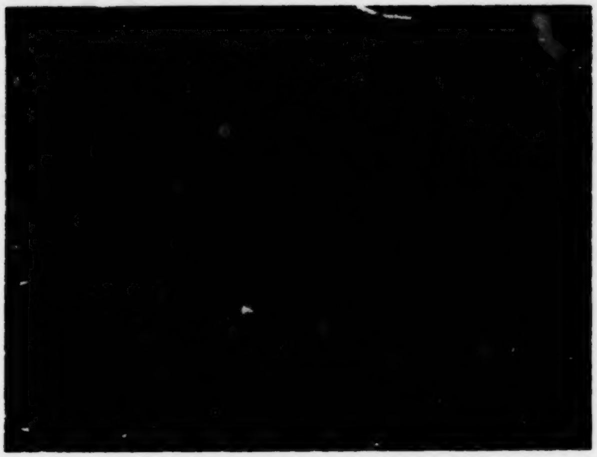
2.

2. *Fisher's Landing bowl,* Columbia River, Washington, 45 CL 12. Associated with a petroglyph site, this carved stone with a bowl as the body of an animal figure, is found in a garden a few feet above the river. On the beach lies a large boulder covered with pecked holes. The sketch shows how the bowl forms part of a petroglyph figure with five-fingered limbs.

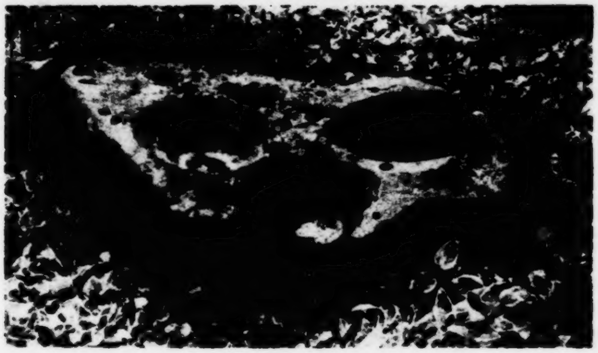
Figure: 160 x 95 cm
Bowl: 38 cm diameter at top, 23 cm at bottom, 14 cm deep, flat bottom.

3. *Horsethief Lake State Park bowls.* R. McClure (pers. comm.) gives this description: "The site is a combination pictograph, petroglyph and mortar site. It is now under the waters of the lake and was in the vicinity of the ethnographic village of the Wishram tribe known as Nixlu'idix on the floodplain of Spedis Creek. It does not yet have a site number. One set of Mortars at this site appears on the flat upper surface of a large basalt boulder. The several mortars were about three inches deep by four inches in diameter. The other set occurred on outcrops of basalt rimrock below two large and deep zoomorphic petroghyph designs. The two sites were flooded in the spring of each year." (No photograph available)

4. *Maryhill bowls.* R. McClure (pers. comm.) also reports a site on the banks of the Columbia near the town of Maryhill. As this site is also now under the water of the lake created by the Bonneville Dam, we must rely on McClure's description: "Small ovoid mortars occurred on the sloping side of a basalt boulder and a long U-shaped groove appeared with them." (No photograph available.)



5.



6.

7.

5. *Browning Harbour bowl,* North Pender Island DeRt 12. This bowl is in a boulder of dense black stone, about 130 x 100 x 60 cm, near the government dock on the north side of Browning Harbour, between high and low tidelines, and is refilled by each high tide. The bowl is oval and measures 25 x 30 cm; the smooth surface of the bowl flows over the curved surface at the long ends of the oval. This site is across the harbour from the canal now dividing North and South Pender Islands, where bowl no. 7 was found, and is not far from the extensive midden deposits at the head of Browning Harbour where a small stream enters the bay.

6. *Bedwell Harbour bowls,* South Pender Island, DeRt 4. In a sandstone boulder 1.5 m x 1 m x 40 cm there are three deep bowls, slightly oval, measuring 30.5 x 35 x 10 cm, 30.5 x 35 x 13 cm, and 30.5 x 30.5 x 10 cm. Although the precise original provenience of this boulder is not known, it is reported to have been moved from the beach at the head of Egeria Bay, the present location of the Bedwell Harbour Marina and Customs Wharf. The bowls were reported by Wilson Duff and the boulder now rests in front of the Bedwell Harbour Marina.

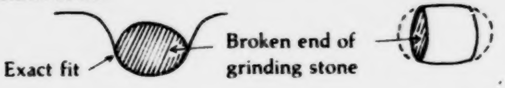
7. *Pender Canal bowl,* North Pender Island, DeRt 1. This sandstone boulder, with its long, smooth, oval bowl, is now under a roofed shelter constructed by the late Herbert Spalding. He and Mrs. Spalding dug the boulder from the bank where it was partially uncovered, on the shore of North Pender Island only about two metres from the place where the bridge connects North and South Pender Islands. Thus it is not far from the famous Canal site excavated by Wilson Duff and others. One corner of the stone jutted from the bank approximately at the high tide line. The boulder is 79 x 67 cm and the bowl measures 45 x 32 cm.

8.

9.

10.

8. *Saturna Beach bowl,* Saturna Island, DeRt 8. Discovered by Lorraine Campbell, who happened to turn over a granite boulder 61 x 35 cm on the sand of Saturna Beach, just below high tide line. Later the black basalt grinding stone was found, which exactly fitted the contour of the bowl. The bowl is oval and measures 33 x 19 cm. The grinding stone which fits it is made from an oval black basalt cobble with both ends removed. The boulder bowl was found where a dry ditch emerges from the bank, which is a midden deposit. The ditch runs only in the winter months, but a short distance up the dry stream is a wet muddy area which may be a spring. Quite a few grinding stones have been found by the Campbells and the bay is an excellent clam-digging site; it is certainly possible that the Saturna Beach bowl was used for grinding clam shell.



9. *Georgeson Bay bowls,* Galiano Island, DfRu 24. The stone shown in the blurred photograph #9 was originally found on Morgan Beach, on Georgeson Bay, at the mouth of Active Pass. A letter to Wilson Duff, written in 1962 by the finder of the bowl, Nigel Morgan (British Columbia Provincial Museum, Archaeology Division files), describes the boulder bowl in these words: "It is of grey granite, weighing about 150 pounds. Dimensions and measurement of indentation are indicated in the picture by the accompanying yardstick, the stone being 18 by 21 inches, by 12 inches deep; and the indentation (which is well worked and exceedingly smooth and regular in shape) is 12 inches by 13 inches, and 3½ inches in depth. Two similar stones . . . were found on the beach, at the mouth of a small creek, and approximately half-way between high and low water points."All three bowls are now missing.

10. *Ganges Harbour bowl,* Salt Spring Island, DfRu 4. A shallow saucer in bedrock at the end of a small point jutting south into Ganges Harbour is defined by a pecked rim about ½ cm high. Not quite round, this bowl measures 24 x 23 cm. The site is between the tide lines and near the deep midden deposits above the beach at the end of Churchill Road. Part of the midden site was examined in March 1973 (G. Roberts, 1973), and although limited in size, the dig revealed a surprising number of labrets (seven) and approximately 7000 shale, slate, steatite and shell beads, found in association with the remains of at least 30 whole or fragmented human skeletons. Artifact traits indicate relationships with the Marpole phase in the regional chronology.

11.
12.

11. *Fulford Habour bowl*, Salt Spring Island, DeRu 63. Found in the bedrock between the tidelines, just below the Catholic Church at Fulford Harbour, the extremely smooth and polished surface of this bowl curves over the rim at the two ends of the oval, measuring 22 x 30 cm and 6 cm deep. The head of Fulford Harbour, where this bowl is found, has deep midden deposits. According to R. Akerman (pers. comm.), whose grandmother was an Indian of this district, a large village occupied land now washed by tides at the mouth of the large creek which drains the Fulford valley and where salmon still come. If such a village once existed, the bedrock bowl would have been at the end of the village, near the probable location of the stream mouth. Across the harbour three petroglyph boulders were discovered between the tide lines by G. Cudmore, of which the two small stones have disappeared and the third is now located at Drummond Park, at the end of Fulford Harbour. An unusual sandstone figure bowl was found in a thin strip of midden which once covered the present gravel pit above Drummond Park. A carved stone bowl was found by Captain Drummond in the present Drummond Park area. This and many other artifacts from the Fulford Harbour area are now in the extensive collection of R. Akerman, Fulford Harbour.

12. *Drummond bowl*, Fulford Harbour, Salt Spring Island, DeRu 18. Among the artifacts in the R. Akerman collection is a broken boulder of blue granite 37 x 22.5 cm with a shallow, smoothly-abraded bowl occupying most of the upper side of the stone. As it is very shallow (2 cm) this bowl is a dubious inclusion but has been added to the list because it is deep enough to hold a liquid, its shape is round and its smooth surface indicates lengthy working of this hard stone. The polished surface runs over the lip at one side, and the side opposite is broken. Its original provenience is unknown but when Mr. Akerman found it, it was on the midden heap at the Drummond property at Fulford Harbour.

13. *Bridgman bowl*, Beaver Point, Salt Spring Island, DeRu 22. A boulder measuring 55.7 x 75.1 x 25 cm contains a bowl 32.5 x 28.6 cm, 12 cm deep, originally found in association with the midden site at the old Bridgman home, Section 54 at the end of Bridgman Road, and now in Victoria at the residence of H. D. W. Bridgman. The original provenience of this boulder bowl is not precisely known. (No photograph available)

14.

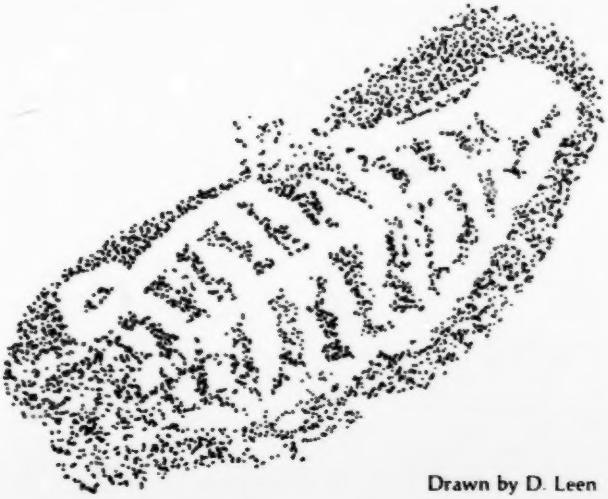
15.

16.

14. *Parminter Point bowl,* Salt Spring Island, DfRv 6. The petroglyph boulder which lies at the extreme high tide line on Salt Spring Island's western shore is one of a group of four sandstone boulders which at present rests in such a way that they suggest a standing figure now toppled. The "head" stone has the pecked features of a face which can be seen one way as human and in reverse as a fish. When seen as human, the head has a top-knot and in the top-knot is a small bowl approximately 10 x 8 cm.

15. *May John bowl,* Sidney, DeRu 1. A boulder 53 x 40 cm and 20 cm high contains a bowl 25 x 36 cm, 8 cm deep. Originally on the shore (probably between tide lines) at Mill Point, it now rests in the garden of Mrs. May John, Blue Heron Road, Sidney.

16. *Thousand Steps bowl,* Ocean Park near Whiterock, DgRr 11. Examined and recorded by Daniel Leen in 1978, this bowl, about the size and depth of a coffee cup, also appears to be the eye of a fish petroglyph. Although the carving is very faint and difficult to observe, it may be found by descending the Thousand Steps at the foot of 15A Avenue (N. Bluff Road) between White Rock and Crescent Beach. Walk south along the railway track eight telegraph poles beyond the small railway bridge, then descend to the beach and search for a boulder about three feet high slanting in a southerly direction. It will be covered with water at high tide. The petroglyph faces towards the direction from which the salmon would come when they were returning to spawn in the Nicomekl or Serpentine Rivers.



Drawn by D. Leen

17.

18.

17. *Hammond bowls.* Known only from W. A. Newcombe's photo (6192 A) now in the Ethnology Division of the British Columbia Provincial Museum, dated October 4, 1930, and labelled "Ceremonial Stone," the boulder has three "drilled" holes, the centre one larger and deeper than the other two. Standing at the back of the stone in Photograph 17 are people of the Katzie Band, and behind them are the houses of their village. The stone appears to be at the river's edge. Simon Pierre, the son of Old Pierre, the Katzie shaman, told W. Suttles that his father used the bowl to bathe a pubescent girl (W. Suttles, pers. comm.).

18. *Degnen Bay bowls,* Gabriola Pass, Gabriola Island, DgRw 3. In a boulder located in the intertidal zone are six bowls, arranged in pairs. The boulder is now partly buried and the lower two-thirds of the rock is covered with seaweed, driftwood, mud and sand, so that only two bowls are usually visible. The boulder now lies so that the bowls are at an angle. Although the boulder may have been shifted by sea-propelled logs, the bowls themselves are not horizontal but have one steep and one shallow side. Average size of the bowls is 30 x 17.5 cm and about 9 cm deep. Of possible relevance is the fact that the Degnen Bay seated human figure bowl was found within 50 feet of the boulder bowls, near the surface of the extensive midden of the Gray property.

19.

19. *Englishman River bowl,* Parksville, DhSb 5. Where the Englishman River turns in a leisurely back eddy before plunging into a narrow gorge, at the site of the earliest bridge over the river (of which only the footings now remain), an egg-shaped bowl may be found near one of the petroglyph figures at this place. Measuring 35 x 18 cm (at water level when the bowl is full), the bowl is 2.5 cm deep. The bottom of this bowl is not polished smooth and does not appear to have been used for grinding. However, these petroglyphs are reported (G. Tranfield, pers. comm.) to have been carved by a deaf-mute Indian who was alive in 1886, and may therefore be quite recent, since the making of such carvings apparently ceased about that time; the bowl may simply have had little use. Nearby, on a wide ledge which overhangs the river and at the same level as the petroglyphs are three other oval bowls, (25 x 18 x 2.5 cm; 30 x 15 x 3 cm; 24 x 18 x 4 cm) which are also rough in texture. All the bowls at this site may be natural. Certainly, at a lower level near the present river water level there are a great many large and small naturally eroded bowls, of various shapes.

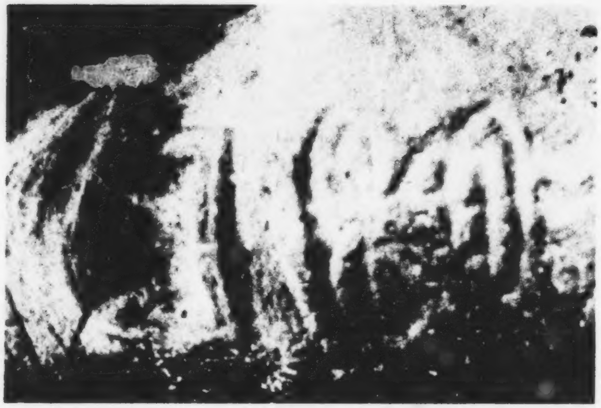
20.

20. *Cape Mudge bowl,* Quadra Island, DiSh 1. Originally found among the petroglyph boulders near the lighthouse, this granite boulder with its bowl has now been moved to Cape Mudge village. In its ancient location between the tide lines the bowl was refilled by each high tide. The surface of the inside of the bowl feels smoother to the touch than the surface of the rest of the boulder.

Boulder: 116.8 x 109.2 cm, 44.5 cm high
Bowl: 43.1 x 45.7 cm, 8.9 cm deep

21.

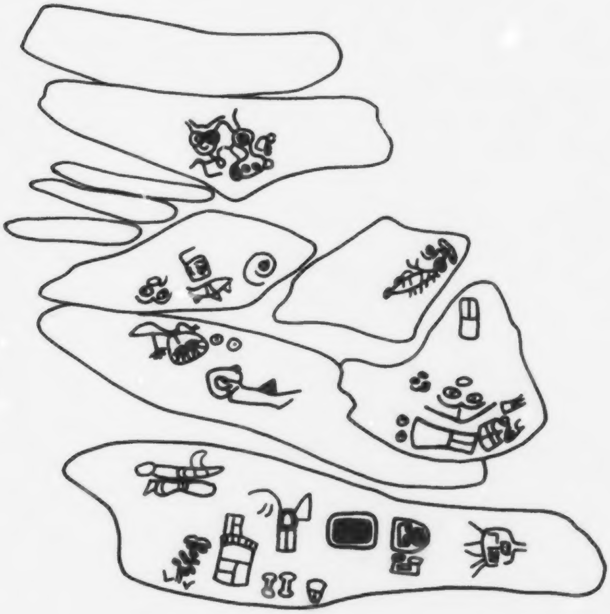
21. *Dogfish Bay bowl,* Quadra Island, EaSg 21. Less than 100 feet lower down the beach from the "sea-wolf" petroglyph is an irregularly shaped boulder approximately a cubic metre in volume. It contains an oval bowl 60 x 40 cm, 8 cm deep. As the bowl is covered with barnacles and mussels, the surface could not be observed. The boulder has been overturned, possibly by wave action or by being struck by a sea-borne log. The petroglyph boulder has a carved figure, locally known as the "sea-wolf", and many smooth pecked cupmarks. Nearby is a fresh-water spring. Mr. F. J. Barrow (1942:94), an early observer of petroglyphs, noted a Quadra Island resident's statement that, according to Indian legends, the petroglyph was for marking the spring. Emmons, writing about the petroglyphs of Alaska, noted that Kun-nook the guardian spirit of fresh water sometimes wore the guise of a wolf, and the local name of the figure may be relevant.

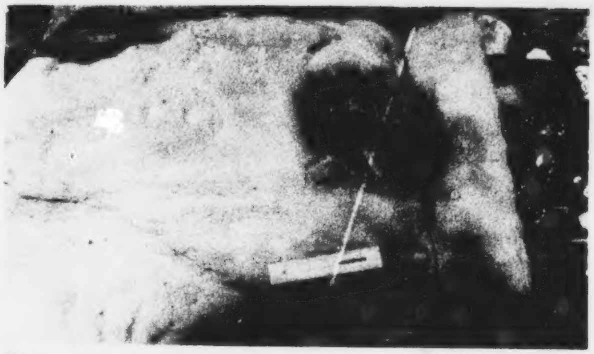


22.

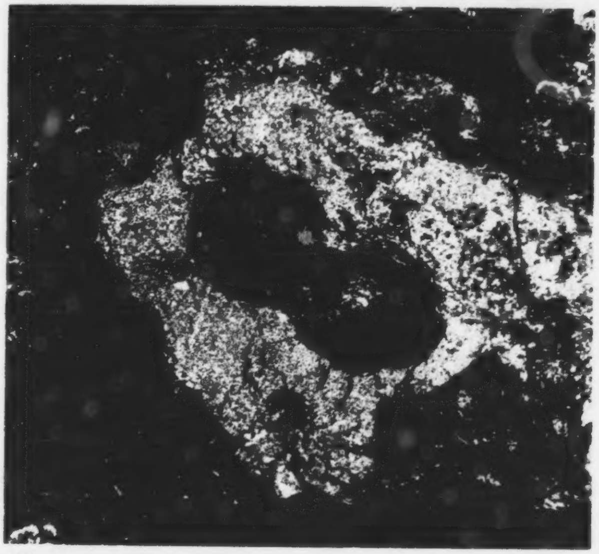
CENTRAL COAST

22. *Meadow Island bowl*, near Bella Bella, FbTa 2. Meadow Island is the burial place for the people of Bella Bella. A short distance east of the ancient cemetery, petroglyphs may be found carved into an outcrop of rock on the ridge of a small point about eight metres above the beach. In the centre of the carved pictures is a square, rimmed bowl. Although this bowl is well above the sea, it was filled with sky-reflecting water when we observed it, presumably from rainfall. The bowl occupies a dominant and central position at the petroglyph site, in the middle of the ridge of the highest part of the outcrop, and would therefore appear to have been made first, before the petroglyphs carved in the same bedrock. Drucker (1943: 110), who in 1943 reported the discovery of the site "when a large tree with seventy-five ascertainable annual rings blew over," found three styles represented in the petroglyph carvings: relief carving, intricate line incising, and rather crude line incising. The petroglyph faces near the bowl are made in the low-relief style, and the bowl has a raised rim. The square shape of this bowl is unusual, but a square carved bowl from the northern part of the coast may be found in the British Columbia Provincial Museum collection. According to Hilary Stewart (1973:100), the large, deep, northern bowls were mainly used for pounding tobacco for chewing.





24.



25.

26.

23. *Schultze bowl*. Collected and donated in 1973 to the University of British Columbia by Mr. R. T. Schultze of Ocean Falls, the boulder 54 cm in diameter and 42 cm high, contains a bowl 37.5 cm in diameter and 15 cm deep. From the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia comes the information that "it is assumed to have come from a camp and/or burial ground, but there is no clear documentation concerning this. It is very likely the largest bowl of this kind found on the coast. Normally the type is found much farther north among the Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit. It is likely that it was not used for grinding ochre, but for grinding tobacco and clam shell, a mixture frequently chewed traditionally by coastal peoples." (M. Bronsden-Rowan, pers. comm.) (No photograph available)

VENN PASSAGE, PRINCE RUPERT

24. *Pike Island bowl*, Venn Passage near Prince Rupert, GbTo 42. This small bowl, 8 cm in diameter, forms the mouth of a petroglyph face, and is found between the tide lines at the end of the passage leading out of Prince Rupert Harbour. Midden deposits of great depth are found along this pass, which was an important fishing area.

25. *Crippen Cove bowls*, Venn Passage, GbTo 41. This pair of bowls may be found at the eastern end of the pass, each approximately 15 cm in diameter and 6.5 cm deep. They are located at the extreme high tide line of a petroglyph site which includes faces, one anthropomorphic figure, and many tiny faces, each composed of three small pecked holes.

26. *Roberson Point bowl*, Venn Passage, GbTo 39. Lying between the tide lines is the hollowed-out form of a life-sized human, a "man-petroglyph" as Harlan I. Smith (1936) called it, but named "The man who fell from heaven" in local Tsimshian traditions. The head is separated from the rest of the body by a ridge and forms a round bowl, filled daily by the rise of the tide.

Bedrock and Boulder Bowls

A SUMMARY OF TRAITS

	No.	NAME	LOCATION
COLUMBIA RIVER	1	*Tsigaglalal bowls*	Columbia River Intertidal
	2	*Fisher's Landing bowl*	Columbia River
	3	*Horsethief Lake State Park bowl*	Columbia River
	4	*Maryhill bowls*	Columbia River
GULF OF GEORGIA / FRASER	5	*Browning Harbour bowl*	North Pender Island
	6	*Bedwell Habour bowls*	South Pender Island
	7	*Pender Canal bowl*	North Pender Island
	8	*Saturna Beach bowl*	Saturna Island
	9	*Georgeson Bay bowls*	Galiano Island
	10	*Ganges Harbour bowl*	Saltspring Island
	11	*Fulford Harbour bowl*	Saltspring Island
	12	*Drummond bowl*	Saltspring Island
	13	*Bridgman bowl*	Saltspring Island
	14	*Parminter Point bowl*	Saltspring Island
	15	*May John bowl*	Sidney
	16	*Thousand Steps bowl*	Ocean Park
	17	*Hammond bowls*	Fraser River
	18	*Degnen Bay bowls*	Gabriola Island
	19	*Englishman River bowl*	Parksville
	20	*Cape Mudge bowl*	Quadra Island
	21	*Dogfish Bay bowl*	Quadra Island
CENTRAL COAST	22	*Meadow Island bowl*	near Bella Bella
	23	*Schultze bowl*	Ocean Falls
VENN PASSAGE	24	*Pike Island bowl*	near Prince Rupert
	25	*Crippen Cove bowls*	near Prince Rupert
	26	*Roberson Point bowl*	near Prince Rupert

Bedrock	Boulder	Single/Multiple	Round	Oval	Square	Rimmed	Small (8-13cm)	Large (20-60 cm)	Soft rock (sandstone)	Hard rock (basalt)	Intertidal	Above high tide	Non-tidal	Assoc. fishing site	Assoc. rock art site	Integrated petroglyph	Near midden deposit	Not *in situ*	Smoothly abraded	Pecked	Largest dimension (cm)
X		7	X				X			X			X	X	X		X				10.5
X		1	X					X		X			X			X	X				38
X		M					X			X			X	X			X				
	X	M							X				X		X		X				
	X	1		X				X		X	X			X			X		X		35
	X	3						X	X		X						X	X	X		35
	X	1		X				X	X		X						X	X	X		45
	X	1		X				X		X	X						X	X	X		33
	X	3	X					X						X	X		X	X			32
X		1	X					X		X	X						X			X	24
X		1		X				X		X	X			X			X		X		30
	X	1	X					X		X				X			X	X	X		37
	X	1		X				X									X	X	X		32.5
	X	1	X				X			X	X					X	X		X		10
	X	1		X				X		X	X						X	X	X		36
	X	1	X				X			X	X			X		X			X		
	X	3											X				X	X			
	X	6		X				X	X		X						X		X		30
X		1		X				X		X				X	X					X	35
	X	1	X					X		X	X			X	X		X	X	X		
	X	1		X				X		X	X				X		X				60
X		1			X	X		X		X		X				X					35
	X	1		X				X		X								X			37.5
X		1		X			X			X	X			X		X	X				8
X		2		X			X			X	X			X	X		X				15
X		1		X				X		X	X			X		X	X				27.5

DISCUSSION

One of the boulder bowls (14) is in the top of a petroglyph head and others (2, 16, 22, 24, 25, 26) are integrated into petroglyph carvings. Such locations lead us to consider Wilson Duff's (1956) study of Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia, in which he describes Seated Human Figure Bowls, Zoomorphic Bowls, Bowls with Human Heads, and Other Stone Bowls. The category Other Stone Bowls has been divided by Duff (1956:72) into the following types:

A. Oval or round boulder bowls, most retaining the outline of the original boulder
   1. Plain
   2. Decorated

B. Vessels of completely modified outline

To determine whether the boulder and bedrock bowls of this paper belong in the Duff Type A, it is necessary first to consider size. It is difficult to make size comparisons between the boulder and bedrock bowls of this paper and Duff's Type A boulder bowls because Duff gives only the outside dimensions of his boulders, which are generally much smaller than the dimensions of the boulders of this paper. The large dimensions of Duff's Type A1 are 22.5 x 19 x 10 cm; 16 cm; 14 x 13.5 x 6 cm; 17.5 cm; 12.5 x 10 x 6 cm; 16 x 16 cm; 15.5 x 12 cm; 21.5 x 18 cm; 12.5 cm; 35 cm; 22.5 cm. The average of the longest dimension is 18.7 cm. The size of the bowls can only be estimated: possibly an average 10 cm diameter. The bowls of the present paper fall into two size categories:

(a) small (8 to 13 cm across)
(b) large (22 to 60 cm across)

Only six bowls (or sets of bowls) fall into the category (a). These are 1, 3, 14, 16, 24, and 25. At the last four of these sites, the bowls form part of a petroglyph figure, although there are six other bowls in the large size category which are closely associated with, or are part of, petroglyphs. It would seem safe to state that most of the bowls listed in this paper (20) would not fit the Duff category, mainly because of the difference in the size of the bowls and the boulder. Also the geographic distribution is more extensive and a number are in bedrock. There is also a difference in material as most of those listed by Duff are sandstone, whereas most of the boulders of this study are of a dense hard rock. Possibly the bowls of this article would form a Type C in the Duff classification for there is nothing to indicate that they are not in the same time slot.

Sixteen of the bowls described here lie between the tide lines, six are on river banks where no tides occur (although the banks of the Columbia and Fraser Rivers are covered by the high spring runoff when the first salmon are coming upriver), only one seashore bowl is above the tide and the original provenience of three is not known. The intertidal location of the bowls, and the association with petroglyphs (frequently in intertidal areas), re-opens the question of sea-level changes in relation to such artifacts. Some writers think that the petroglyphs are now below high tide because of the rise of the sea (or sinking of the land) in the post-glacial period while others believe that the petroglyphs were carved between the tide lines in order to carry a message from men on earth to the denizens of the sea. The purposeful choice of an intertidal site for petroglyphs is supported by a Tlinglit myth recorded by Swanton (1909: 3-5), which relates that Raven made a petroglyph speak to a spring salmon, telling it to come to the shore. It was E. L. Keithahn's (1940:132) opinion that the petroglyphs, carved on boulders which were located near salmon-spawning streams and which faced out towards the sea and were covered every day by the rising tide, were for calling the fish. The association between some petroglyphs and the return of the salmon is further supported by Boas (1890:108), who reported that "if the fish do not come in due season, and the Indians are hungry, a Nootka wizard will make an image of a swimming fish and put it into the water in the direction from which the fish generally appear." Describing the Jack Point petroglyph, Barnett (1955:89), reported that when the salmon run was late, the ritualist painted over the carved figures of fish with red ochre, and also put ochre on pieces of four different substances (goat wool and a grass are the two he identified) and these were burned at the foot of the petroglyph boulder. The Tsigaglalal petroglyph at The Dalles, which was frequently rubbed with red ochre, looks down on what was one of the best salmon fishing sites in the world. The small bowls near Tsigaglalal may therefore have been used for the grinding of ochre, and some of the other bowls in this paper may have had the same purpose, or for the ritual offering of the ochre to the creatures of the sea.

In her examination of stone bowls, Stewart (1973:96-103) observes a lack of clear division between mortars and bowls and her list includes a selection of smaller undecorated mortars which she has defined as bowls. The Ganges Harbour bedrock bowl (10) is similar in shape to one of the mortars (14-7NC 10) illustrated by Stewart.

She notes that some of the mortars still retained traces of pigments, and the mortars "could also be employed to crush roots and other substances for medicines and potions for use by the Shaman." Stewart states that the large deep bowls are found only to the north and were mainly used for pounding tobacco for chewing. Because the bedrock and boulder bowls of this paper are frequently between the tide lines and because some are impossible to move, it would seem unlikely that they would have a role in the serving of food and more probable that they were mortars.

At some petroglyph sites there are natural bowls. At Lock Bay on Gabriola Island, a natural bowl is in the top of a boulder on which two petroglyph faces are carved, and as the boulder is located between the tide lines, the bowl is refilled with sea water each day. There are a great many other boulders along this stretch of shore, but the carvers of the petroglyph faces chose the boulder with the natural bowl in the top. Again, there are natural bowls close to the original location of the Georgeson Bay petroglyph and the Georgeson Bay boulder bowls. If there are man-made bowls at some petroglyph sites, it is reasonable to ask whether the natural bowls at other petroglyph sites could have been put to some purpose there as well.

Ethnographic evidence concerning these boulder and bedrock bowls is scanty indeed. Although much is recorded of the use of ochre in First Salmon ceremonies, I can find nothing written concerning the preparation of ochre or the possible use of boulder and bedrock bowls for this purpose. A reference in Teit (1906:281) describing the First Salmon ceremonies on the Lillooet River states:

> It seems that the Lillooet River band had some further ceremonies in which they passed the fish through smoke, afterwards depositing it on a stone dish or using a stone vessel for holding the fire; but I did not learn any details of this custom. Some stone dishes used in this ceremony were collected by Mr. Harlan I. Smith on Lillooet River near the head of Harrison Lake.

The bowls shown in Teit, (1906: fig. 97b) collected by H. I. Smith (Duff's [1956:63] Zoomorphic Bowls Type B, Nos. 24 and 25, and Additional Zoomorphic bowl No. 2) are zoomorphic in form. Smith (1923:36) says they were used "for ceremonial fumigation of the first spring salmon of the season." With regard to the bowl with two heads, Teit says it was used for catching fat-drippings in front of the fire, but implies that such bowls were used by the Lillooet people but were found, not made, by them. Certainly the stone bowls illustrated in Teit are not large enough to hold a salmon, so that fumigation or catching fat drippings would seem a more logical use. E. R. C. Webber (1899:311) in her description of "an old Kwanthum village" and the north bank of the Fraser River, states:

> The first fish caught in each village or camping place was offered to God by burning. A small portion of the entrails was placed in a bowl with the heart and taken by the medicine man as far out into the Frazer (*sic*) as he could wade and there it was held aloft and burned.

In Wilson Duff's *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser River of British Columbia*, (1952:120) his informant P.C. from Yale states:

> Early in the spring many kinds of fish were being caught, but the people celebrated only the first spring salmon. Any man could catch the first one and his wife would cook it, helped by the people near by. The fish was cut up into small pieces, about two by four inches, and each piece was skewered on a cottonwood stick. The pieces were all boiled in a big stone bowl, or in a hole in a rock. While the fish was cooking, the news was spread, and everybody in the vicinity was asked to come to the evening meal. The oldest and wisest man and woman in the family gave a ceremony. They prayed to the maker of the world to bring lots of good salmon into the country. The pieces of fish were distributed to everyone present.

It may be concluded that the ethnographic evidence for the use of the bedrock and boulder bowls in the First Salmon ceremonies is not substantial.

Another possible use must be mentioned. Although he makes no reference to the use of stone bowls in this connection, Barnett (1955:150) reports that

> Sanetch doctors sometomes gazed into a pan of water in which, with the aid of their spirits, they could see all the world reflected.

Further, Barnett (1955:58) writes that

> In Salish culture in general it is not uncommon for shamans and seers to use containers of water in which to see distant places, and for shamans to use water in their curing procedures.

When we speculate that some of the bowls may have been used for the grinding of ochre or clamshell, we only scratch the surface of "meaning." The Nanaimo ritualist burned ochre-covered substances; was he sending some message to the skies with the rising smoke? In *Images Stone B.C.*, Wilson Duff (1975:16) wrote of stone as both the medium and the message, describing it as heavy, tough, unyielding, everlasting, and when it is chosen as the medium for sculpture, he said, the stone's qualities and associations are incorporated as part of the meaning, "a proper medium for man's eternal truths" (Duff, 1975:18). Duff understood the tobacco mortar as a "vessel of thought" and concluded that the underlying theme was "transformation." Do these ideas help us to understand the bedrock and boulder bowls? What is the power of the red ochre, an ancient symbol of warmth and life, used in Palaeolithic burials. Does it "mean" rebirth? A bowl is a female symbol, as old as man's consciousness. The return of the fish is evidence of the power of symbols and rituals: last year salmon were caught and the bones returned to sea, and this year the fish return, a rebirth. If the bedrock and boulder bowls held ground ochre, the swelling tide would devour it, transport it, and out of the great sea would come the life-sustaining salmon. Perhaps at another level of meaning the bowls capture a fraction of the sea and transform it into a mirror, expressing the idea that we only know a thing in terms of its opposite: earth/air; light/dark. At night, when the moon is full and the sea glitters with moon fragments, the bowl itself becomes a round black moon; but if you position yourself with care you can see the real moon as a small bright coin reflected in the dark moon at your feet.

Diligently we can list the bowls and think about them, but we can only make guesses concerning their power. Perhaps Wilson's poem describes our dilemma:

Stone images
are
always
hard
to see.

The only thing
is everything.

Stone images
are
always
hard
to see.

The only thing they really, really mean
is everything they only seem to mean.

References

Barnett, H. G.

1955 *Coast Salish of British Columbia.* University of Oregon, Eugene.

Barrow, F. J.

1942 Petroglyphs and Pictographs on the British Columbia Coast, in *Canadian Geographical Journal,* 24:94-101.

Boas, F.

1890 Second general report on the Indians of British Columbia, in British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Report on the northwestern tribes of Canada,* 1:108.

Drucker, P.

1943 *Archaeological survey on the northern northwest coast.* Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Bull. 133. Anthropological papers no. 30.

Duff, W.

1952 The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser River of British Columbia, *Anthropology in British Columbia.* Memoir No. 1, British Provincial Museum, Victoria.

1956 Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia, in *Anthropology in British Columbia,* 5, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

1975 *Images Stone B.C.* Hancock House, Saanichton.

Keithahn, E. L.

1940 Petroglyphs of Southeastern Alaska, in *American Antiquity* 6:132.

Meade, E.

1971 *Indian rock carvings of the Pacific Northwest.* Hancock House, Saanichton.

Roberts, C. W.

1973 *DfRu 4: The Hill site.* Archaeological Sites Advisory Board, unpublished report.

Smith, H. I.

1923 *An album of prehistoric Canadian art.* Canada, Dept. of Mines Geological Survey, Victoria Memorial Museum Bulletin, 37, Anthropological Series no. 8, Ottawa.

1936 The Man Petroglyph Near Prince Rupert, or The Man Who Fell From Heaven, In: *Essays in Anthropology Presented to Alfred Louis Kroeber.* University of California Press, Berkeley p. 309.

Stewart, H.

1973 *Artifacts of the Northwest Coast Indians.* Hancock House, Saanichton.

Swanton, J. R.

1909 *Tlingit myths and texts.* Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Teit, J. A.

1906 *The Lillooet Indians.* American Museum of Natural History, Memoirs. Vol. 4, part 5. New York.

Webber, E. R. C.

1899 An old Kwanthum village—its people and its fall, in *American Antiquarian,* 21:304-314.

Notes on the Iconography of the Haida Moon

Alan L. Hoover
ETHNOLOGY DIVISION
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Introduction

Wilson Duff (1970) has discussed the manner in which the moon was depicted in Haida crest art. In all the examples cited by Duff, the moon is represented as a circular ring enclosing a central face that has a recurving beak or nose (1970:247). This type of beak has always been interpreted as signifying hawk or thunderbird (Boas, 1955:190; Holm, 1967). Duff points out that

> A recurved beak does not automatically symbolize hawk, nor does it necessarily signify thunderbird; among these Haida at least, it was also a feature of the moon conceived of as a "Moon bird."
> (Duff, 1970:249)

Duff's case for claiming that "... the moon itself was (exclusively) iconographically conceived of as a bird" is rather tenuous. It is based on a very small sample, seven items which include three models and a few words which C. F. Newcombe wrote on the back of a print of a photograph of Captain Gold's house taken by Richard Maynard in 1884. This paper discusses the iconography of the Haida moon using a larger sample and with reference to additional ethnographic information.

Data

The moon crest was claimed by four Haida Raven clan families (Swanton, 1905:114). Using the Swanton numbering system, they are the R2 family of Ninstints, the R4 family of Skedans, the R9's of Tcaalt, and the Kaigani R19 family. In addition, one Raven family, the R16, used the new moon "... as a house door ..." (Swanton, 1905: 271).

The present sample comprises 24 items, including five frontlets, five mortuary poles, five detached memorial poles, three house frontal poles, two inside house posts, a kerfed chest, a house gable ornament and an argillite carving. Each image or image cluster that has been judged as representing the moon can be abstracted into two component parts: an identifying and non-identifying attribute. The two identifying attributes are: an encircling ring and a crescent. The crescent has three attribute states: an encircling crescent, a separate non-encircling crescent, and an encircling bi-crescentic. The four non-identifying variables are: a face with a recurved beak or nose which includes one example that has an extended and recurved septum; an animal face/head, including the latter attached to a quadruped body; a human face, including the latter as part of a quadruped body; and a straight-beaked bird, identified as Raven.

Five memorial poles and two house posts exhibit the straight-beaked bird in association with a crescent moon. Six of these poles stood at the Kaigani village of Old Kasaan on Prince of Wales Island and one at Kayang on Masset Inlet. The poles at Kasaan belonged to two Raven clan families who both claimed Raven as a crest figure (Swanton, 1905:271, 272). Blackman (1973:173) lists the crest figures on the Yakyhlan'nus, R19, pole, (second left in Fig. 1) including Raven, but makes no mention of moon although this family did claim the moon as a crest (Swanton, 1905:271). In discussing the two memorial poles at Kasaan (Fig. 1), which belonged to Chief Skowal[1] of the Tasla'nas, R20, family who did not claim the moon as a crest (Swanton, 1905:272) both Blackman (1973:173) and Barbeau (1950,1:352) state that the figure of Raven holding the crescent relates to the Raven cycle myth, specifically when Raven stole the moon and flew up through the smoke hole with it held in his beak (Swanton, 1950a:116-118). The older pole (third right Fig. 1) was raised circa 1885-87 by "Hartz-zoon," "Snow," who later became Skowal. The house it stood in front of was known as "Rib House" (Garfield, n.d.). No information has been found on the date of the raising of the newer pole (second right Fig. 1). The two house posts also belonged to Chief Skowal. They were inside what

---

[1] These two poles stood in front of Skowal's second house which, according to Blackman (1973:170), was erected sometime before 1870. Previously Skowal had lived in the house immediately behind the 1870 house, well known for its house frontal pole depicting very European-like, perhaps Russian, human figures (Blackman, 1973; Barbeau, 1950,1:406; Keithahn, 1963:143).

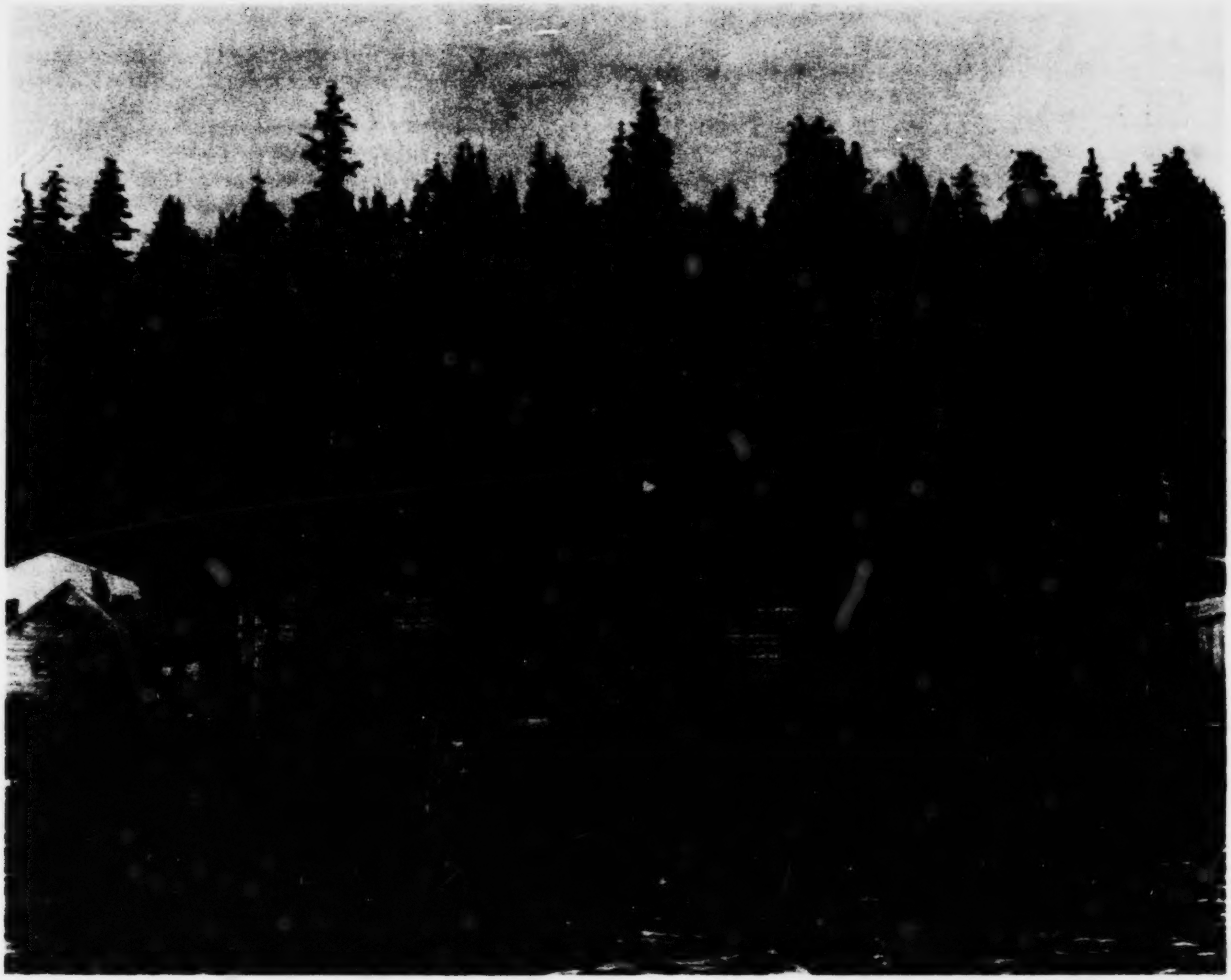


Fig. 1. Old Kasaan, Prince of Wales Island. The R19 pole is second from left, rear row. Skowal's memorial poles are seen second and third from right, front row. Skowal's earlier house frontal pole depicting the European figures can be seen at the rear on the extreme right. (C. F. Newcombe, 1902, British Columbia Provincial Museum (BCPM) PN 198)

Blackman (1973:172) calls Skowal's "first house" (cf. footnote #1). Each pole depicts a Raven, one a male (Fig. 2), the other a female with a labret, with their beaks parallel to the longitudinal axis of the pole. The moon appears as a crescent in the beak of Raven, the opening of the crescent at the top, each "hand" of the bird grasping an end of the crescent. Contained within each crescent is a small human figure, analogous to the ones contained within the crescents of Skowal's memorial poles (Fig.1). Garfield (n.d.) notes that these two poles refer to the mythical episode in which Raven "brings moon to mankind." Perhaps the small human figures refer to Raven's rebirth to the daughter of the owner of the ball of light (Swanton, 1905a:116-118). The other memorial pole at Kasaan (Barbeau, 1950,11:580, 581, 582) was erected after 1888 by Kate Gamede (Garfield, n.d.), a member of the Tasla'nas family (Blackman, 1973:173). This woman, while living in Victoria, married a Mr. Spencer, "variously described as a photographer and a cattle baron" (Blackman, 1973:173). When he died Spencer left his wife $7000 with which she paid for the pole and her house. The European male figure atop the pole represents Mr. Spencer. The scrolls beneath his feet were considered to be a typical white man's design. The Raven with moon in his beak refers to Raven's theft of the moon. The moon was carved in three sections, one on either side of the beak, disappearing into the joint at the top of the wing, with the third forming a band between the inside edges of the wings. The bottom figure on the pole represents the strong man tearing the sea-lion (Garfield, n.d.). No documentation has been found for the pole at Kayang but the similarity in imagery suggests that the same mythic episode is being referred to. The Kayang pole differs in having the crescent placed on the Raven's chest rather than held in the beak. On the basis of the documentation for the poles of Chief Skowal, particularly in view of the fact that Skowal did not own the moon crest, it is reasonable to conclude that the moon could be depicted not in the context of a crest display, but as an element in a mythical episode, as is the case with the model pole illustrated and described by Swanton (1905: P1. 111, Fig. 4, 125).

Two artifacts depict a humanoid Raven figure with the crescent moon. British Columbia Provincial Museum artifact number 6370 (Fig. 3), a small argillite container, illustrates on one face a transforming man-Raven holding a crescent in his beak. This artifact is without documentation. The second example is a pole (Fig. 4) which stood at one outside corner of the "Stork" house at Klinkwan which belonged to the "raven lineage of Yeltadzie" (Garfield, n.d.). The top figure is a humanoid wearing a spruce-root hat (missing in the illustration) and holding a crescent moon on his knees. The inside curve of the crescent holds a small human identified by Garfield (n.d.) as a man with a twig of salal berries. Garfield claims that the "wings" on the elbows (not visible in the photograph) of the human-like figure identify it as Raven. The figure below Raven is the owner of the light whose "protruding tongue indicates that he is dying from loss of his power." The latter figure holds his daughter between his knees. The daughter is the woman from whom Raven is reborn. The bottom figure represents the "slave" (?) and "powers of Moon Owner" that prevented Raven from gaining immediate access to the house which contained the light (Garfield, n.d.).

Three artifacts depict the moon in association with animal heads or faces. The first of these, a mortuary pole from Kaisun is identified by C. F. Newcombe as "... Capt. Gold's sister's xat ... moon in centre" (Newcombe photograph E66-11/43, Ethnology Division, BCPM). The moon

Fig. 2. Skowal's inside house post, Old Kasaan. (Photography Collection, University of Washington Library)

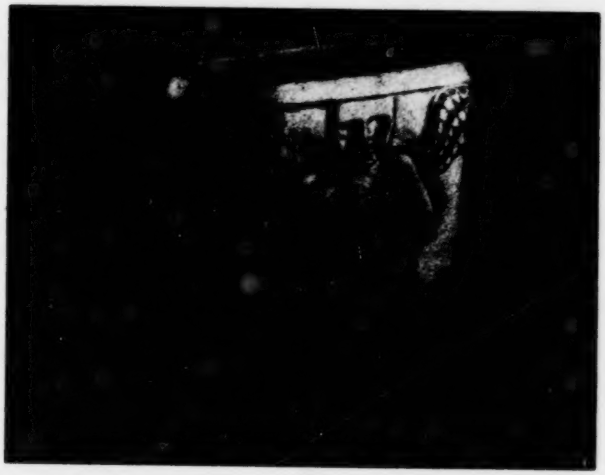


Fig. 3. Argillite container depicting a transforming Raven with a crescent moon. (BCPM, CPN 6370)

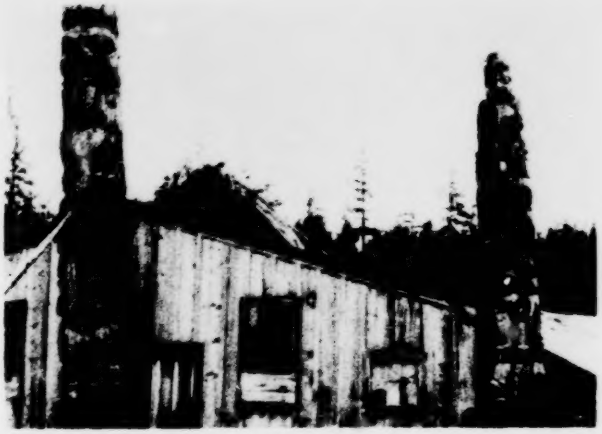


Fig. 4. Klinkwan, Prince of Wales Island. The top figure on the pole at right is Raven in human form holding the crescent moon. (C. F. Newcombe, 1901, BCPM, PN 118)

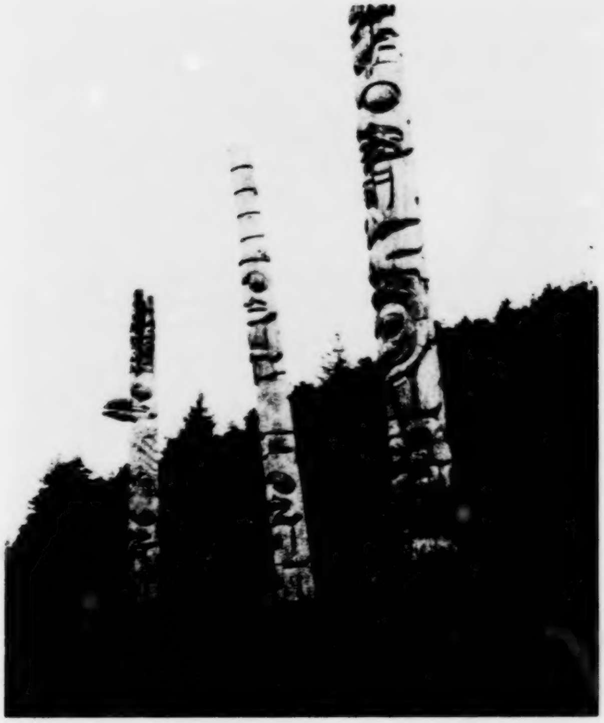


Fig. 5. Chaatl village. The moon crest is depicted by the segmented ring surrounding the head of the eared quadruped. (C. F. Newcombe, 1901, BCPM, PN 95)

is here depicted as a raised disk in the centre of which is the head of a carnivore with curled-back lips, bared, clenched teeth and prominent bear-like nostrils (Holm, 1967). Its upper portions are covered with moss so that the presence or absence of ears can not be determined. The R9 family, to which Gold's sister belonged, claimed two carnivorous mammals as crests, the killer whale and sea-lion (Swanton, 1905:270). The second example of this type, National Museum of Man artifact number V11-B-688, depicts a bear-like, earless head with a pronounced snout, abalone eyes and teeth, encircled by an inlaid abalone crescent (Gunther, 1962:17). The crescent is widest at the bottom, narrowing toward the two points at the top. This piece was purchased from A. A. Aaronson by the Geological Survey of Canada in 1899. It was supposedly collected at Skidegate. The third member of this set is a pole photographed in 1901 by C. F. Newcombe at the village of Chaatl (Tcaalt) (Fig. 5). W. Woods and T. Collison informed Newcombe that the pole illustrated the moon crest, among others, and belonged to Captain Gold (Newcombe, n.d.). The moon crest is here associated with a quadruped whose bear-like face (Holm, 1967) has ears and a protruding tongue. The moon crest itself is apparently depicted by the segmented ring which encircles the face of the animal figure. The ring is grasped by the upstretched hands or paws of the figure, indicating, perhaps, that the ring is not part of the animal's body.

Three specimens, two of which have no documentation identifying them as representing the moon, are associated with human or humanoid faces. The first example, (Fig. 6), a frontlet which was part of a collection assembled by A. A. Aaronson, portrays a human face with a diagonal, inlaid abalone line on each cheek and a cross on the forehead. The face is encircled by an inlaid abalone ring that has a raised inner and outer edge. Notes in the Newcombe Collection (n.d.) attributed to Aaronson, claim that this piece represents the sun. This identification is probably false as no Haida family claimed the sun as a crest (Swanton, 1905:114-115). The second piece is a frontlet (Fig. 7) which depicts a human face with two diagonal lines and the forehead cross seen on the previous example. It differs from the latter in that the central face is surrounded by a crescent rather than a ring. The crescent is widest at one side, narrowing as it encircles the face, the crescent being open at the opposite side or nine o'clock position in relation to the viewer. As with the previous example there is no documentation identifying the image as a representation of the moon. The frontlet in the photograph (Fig. 7) is worn by the artist John Robson, a member of the R13 family, who did not lay claim to the moon as crest (Newcombe, n.d.;

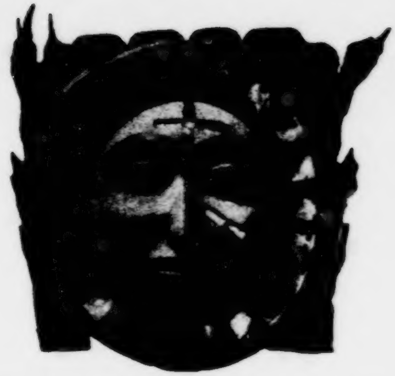


Fig. 6. National Museum of Man frontlet V11-B-690. According to G. T. Emmons (1914:66) the abalone on the cheeks and forehead imitates the custom of gluing abalone on the human face. (National Museums of Canada 77020)

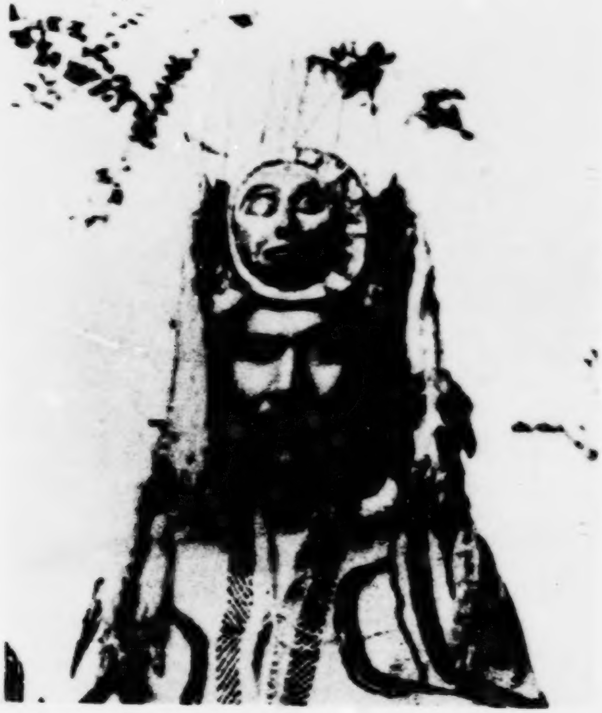


Fig. 7. Haida carver John Robson. In a 1904 letter (Newcombe, n.d.) to C. F. Newcombe Robson notes the location of this photograph as Government Street in Victoria. The present location of the frontlet and embroidered blanket, probably Bella Coola, is unknown. (Fleming Brothers, 1895-1900, BCPM, PN 5444)

Wilson Duff, field note, 1961; Swanton, 1905:270). The third example, a house frontal pole owned by the R4 family, stood in the village of Skedans (Smyly, 1973:68, 12A). The third figure from the top was described as:

> The Moon. This has a small face in it, and flatter than that seen on ... (Skedan's mortuary pole at Skidegate) ... but has the same significance (Newcombe, n.d.).

J. Wesley described the third figure as "... the moon, which has no thunderbird with it" (Newcombe, n.d.). The moon is represented on this pole by a humanoid figure in a kneeling position, arms bent at the elbows, forearms at ninety degrees to the longitudinal axis of the pole. Its face is surrounded by a wide circular ring that extends beyond the lateral edges of the pole by means of two pieces that are attached by iron staples (Smyly, 1973:69). Within the area of the ring are four small carvings. The one directly above the central face appears to be a human face. The other three carvings, one at each side of the central face, and one directly below it, can not be identified as to subject or subjects portrayed.

The most common non-identifying attribute is the face with recurved beak or nose. Nine specimens exhibit this attribute. Seven of these are enclosed by a circular ring, one by a bi-crescentic ring, whereas the ninth is associated with a separate non-enclosing crescent. Three examples have wings associated with the central face. Five have documentation identifying the central face as a bird. James Deans (Newcombe, n.d.) claims that the R4 mortuary at Skidegate (Fig. 8) represents the moon and thunderbird. This seems improbable as the R4 family did not claim the thunderbird as a crest (Swanton, 1905:269). A descendent of Chief Skedans concurs on this position in a statement he gave to Newcombe.

> ... On the top is the Moon, the face inside its circle merely standing for the face seen in the Moon and not being a separate crest (Newcombe, n.d.)

The R4 chest or coffin from Skedans that was collected by Newcombe for the Field Museum in Chicago is described by Swanton (1905:132; Fig. 12a) as depicting the "... moon represented like a bird." Swanton may simply be describing the image which does have bilaterally applied carved and painted designs indicating wings. The R4 mortuary pole at Skedans (Smyly, 1973:68, 12c), raised, strangely enough, by Chief Skedans for his son, a member of the E3 family, is described by J. Wesley, a Newcombe informant, as depicting the moon and thunderbird. As noted above, the R4 did not claim the

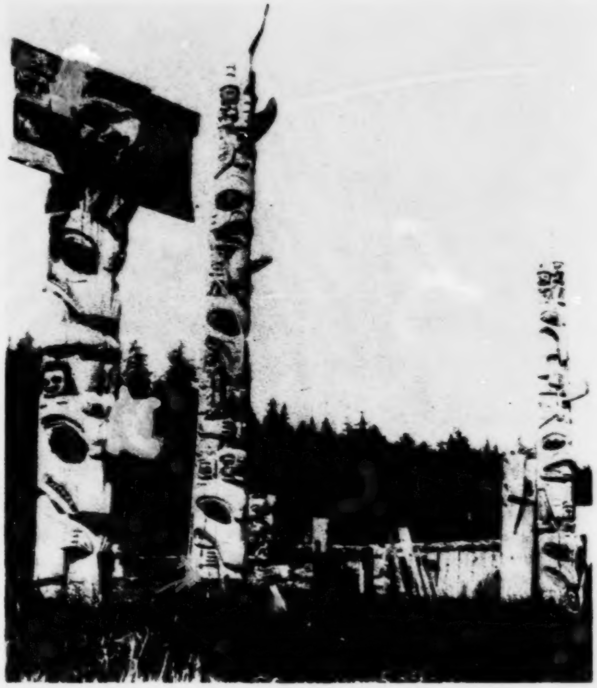


Fig. 8. R4 mortuary pole at Skidegate, left, with the moon crest as its top figure. (Richard Maynard, 1888, BCPM, PN 9089)

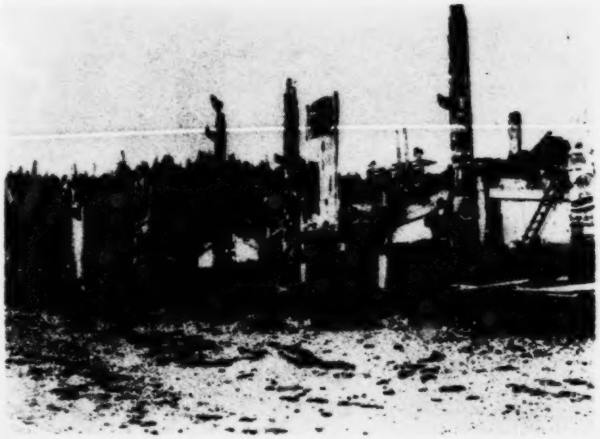


Fig. 9. R9 mortuary at Skidegate, third from right. (Edward Dossetter, 1881, American Museum of Natural History PN 5533)

thunderbird as a crest, nor did the E3 family (Swanton, 1905:114-115). Henry Moody (Newcombe, n.d.) claims that the R9 mortuary at Skidegate (Fig. 9), which held the remains of a Captain Gold, depicts the moon and thunderbird. This attribution is at least plausible as Captain Gold or "Chief Nankilstlas" (Newcombe, n.d.; quoted in Duff, 1970:247) did have the right to display both the moon and thunderbird (Swanton, 1905:247). The R9 gable ornament (Fig. 10) discussed by Duff (1970) is identical in form to the R9 mortuary pole mentioned above (Fig. 9). The image was affixed to the gable peak of a painted house front identified by Newcombe as belonging to Captain Gold. The relationship between the carved plaque and the painting on the house front is not clear, although, as Duff notes, Newcombe's remark "birds on sides = moon bird" implies that the two profile birds, one on each side of the large central face, depict some further aspect of the moon crest owned by Captain Gold. Newcombe recorded no interpretation of the large painted face nor the small human figure contained within it. James Deans (1899:43-45) recorded a story which he claims is about "... the moon and all the figures represented ..." on Captain Gold's house. The story contains a reference to a woman who marries a man from the moon who is referred to as "... the big nose ..." (Deans, 1900:43, 1893). If Deans' contention, that the images on Captain Gold's house depict aspects of this story, is given credence, it seems feasible to suggest that the face within the ring with its large recurved beak or nose does not represent the moon as a bird, as claimed by Duff (1970:249), but rather represents this "man" called "big nose" who lived on the moon. Deans' notes that this story was "adopted" by the Haida (1899:43), presumably from the Coast Tsimshian as the locale for the myth is given as "Port Simshean." This and the fact that the woman in the story is the sole survivor of her people following some sort of catastrophe, leads me to believe that Deans has recorded a very fragmented version of the Gauō myth recorded by Boas (1912:192-225) and Barbeau (1929:80). In essence the myth involves the marriage of a woman to a sky-being and the giving of crests to the children of this marriage by the father or grandfather. The crests listed by Boas are the moon, stars, rainbow, and the "... Lax-ōm in the form of a man" (1912:213). Barbeau lists Moon, Stars, Rainbow and Bird of the Sky (1929:80). Perhaps Bird of the Sky is Barbeau's gloss for Lax-ōm.[2] Halpin's description of the lax-ōm (lax'ɔ'm) is:

---

[2] For a discussion of the problems concerning Barbeau's English glosses for "monster" crests see Halpin, 1973:159.

> . . . A supernatural bird with a long straight beak; also a human with a long nose, also said to have a recurved beak (1973:159).

The lax'ɔ'm is included by Halpin with a group of thirteen crest figures, many of which are described as having recurved beaks, that she classifies as "Thunderbirds (by various names)" (1973:159). Perhaps Newcombe's remark "birds on sides = moon bird" is a reference to the lax'ɔ'm acquired by the descendents of Gauō as one of the crest figures which with moon commemorated the marriage of Gauō to the sky-being.[3] In terms of the R9 family there is additional circumstantial evidence which makes such a conclusion less improbable. The moon, according to a Swanton informant, a member of the E9 whose father was an R9, was obtained by the Haida from the Tsimshian, specifically at Kitkatla (Swanton, 1905:108, 109). The Tsimshian origin of the moon crest among the Haida is also confirmed by Swanton's statement that:

> A great number of crests were obtained from Djé'basa, the Tsimshian chief of Kitkatla, especially through the Haida chief at Skedans, who was his friend (1905:108).

The Haida chief is GidanstA or Skedans, head of the R4 family (Swanton, 1905:79). Djē·basa (tsiybEsE) belonged to the first ranked gispəwudwa´də house at Kitkatla (g·itxa´ɬa) which did not claim the moon as a crest (Halpin, 1973:283, 382). The moon crest at Kitkatla was claimed by seks, chief of the second ranked gispəwudwa´də house (Halpin, 1973:283, 382). According to Newcombe (n.d.), "Shakes" from Kitkatla, probably seks, gave the mountain goat crest to Chief Skedans. This crest appears opposite to the moon crest on the R4 chest discussed above (Swanton, 1905:132, 12C). As seks or Shakes owned both the moon and mountain goat crests (Halpin, 1973:382), logically it was he who gave the moon to the R4 family rather than Djē·basa as inferred by Swanton (1905:108).[4] Additional evidence, of a peripheral nature, for the thesis that the moon crest is Tsimshian in origin among the Haida, is the statement by Swanton that:

> . . . when a shaman was inspired or possessed by the moon he spoke Tsimshian as he spoke Tlingit if the spirit which possessed him was from the Tlingit country (1905:38).

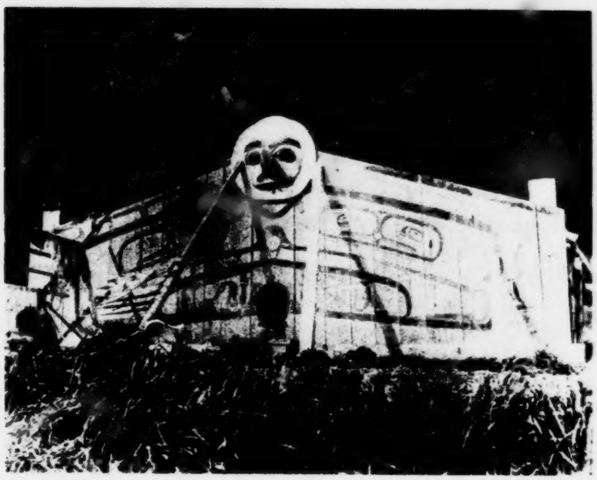


Fig. 10. Captain Gold's house with gable ornament. Located at Second Beach near Skidegate. (Richard Maynard, 1884, BCPM, PN 9059)

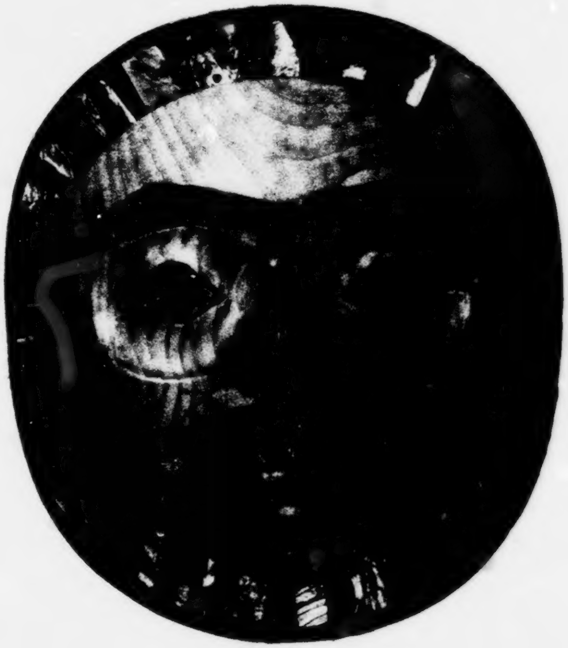


Fig. 11. National Museum of Man frontlet V11-B-687. (National Museums of Canada J-2790)

---

[3] It would appear logical, metaphorically, to represent this creature as a supernatural bird, glossed "thunderbird," as with the R9 mortuary at Skidegate. Evidence for this position is given in the description of the sky being's appearance and actions. The sky being announces his presence to Gauō by the flashing of lightning and his "garments were like tongues of fire." He then gathered Gauō and her daughter under his arms and flew up into the sky (Boas, 1912:210-12).

[4] In this context Halpin notes that although only the gispəwudwa´də houses who have the gauō myth have a proper claim to the moon crest, all four clans claim it as a naxnɔ´x (1973:168).

In other words, the moon was from the Tsimshian mainland. The next example is a mortuary pole that stood at Ninstints (Barbeau, 1950:525, Fig. 266). Newcombe (n.d.) records that it exhibits crests, including the moon, of the R2 family. They owned a house name that belonged to Djē·basa at Kitkatla, the latter, according to Swanton (1905:282), a great friend of the R2's. NMM frontlet V11-B-687 (Fig. 11) exhibits a central face with recurved nose/beak and an encircling inlaid abalone ring. This piece was purchased from Aaronson in 1899. It was apparently collected at Skidegate. Aaronson's catalogue note states that the piece represents the thunderbird.[5] A frontlet which appears in three Winter and Pond photographs (Fig. 12) taken at the Kaigani village of Klinkwan about 1895, combines the face with a recurved beak/nose and a crescent moon. The face is part of a bird-like body, on the chest of which is a small face framed by an abalone crescent. At present no documentation has been found relating to this artifact. The last example is a figure on a house frontal pole which stood in the village of Howkan (Fig. 13). The image is composed of an encircling carved ring with a central face. The face does not have a large recurved beak/nose, but does have the septum extended below the nose to join the upper lip and thus has "bird-like" qualities (Bill Holm, pers. comm., 1975). The encircling ring narrows at the top and bottom. The carved details at top and bottom indicate that the ring may be composed of two symmetrical crescents, thus forming a bi-crescentic ring. Viola Garfield (n.d.) recorded information that identifies this figure as moon. This contention can perhaps be tested by examining other specimens which may combine encircling rings with images other than those discussed above, and by comparing subsequent formal attributions with relevant documentation that may exist. There seems to be no problem with the second so-called identifying variable, the crescent. Its presence does not logically lead to any other attribution than moon, although there seems no way to differentiate between crest and non-crest moon unless documentation of family affiliation exists.

Duff's (1970) position, that the Haida conceived of the moon exclusively as a bird, is incorrect with reference to the data discussed in this paper. In terms of those images of the moon that Duff considered, his position is more difficult to evaluate. The available documentation on those pieces that depict the moon as a circular ring enclosing a central face with a recurved beak/nose suggests that the moon itself was not conceived of as a

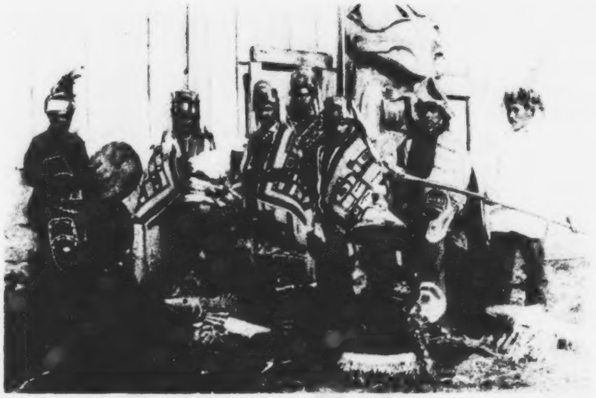


Fig. 12. Kaigani Haida people at Klinkwan. Man second from left wears a frontlet that illustrates a bird with a recurved beak and a crescent moon on its chest. (Winter and Pond, *ca.* 1895, Sheldon Jackson Museum and Alaska Historical Library)

Fig. 13. House frontal pole at Howkan, Prince of Wales Island. (C. F. Newcombe, 1901, BCPM, PN 844)

bird by the Haida, but that it was often represented with a bird-like creature, usually glossed in English as "thunderbird."[6] It may be that this manner of representing the moon relates to the original acquisition of the moon crest from the Tsimshian. Perhaps the Tsimshian from whom the Haida obtained the moon represented it in such a manner. Halpin (1973:228; Pl. 52) discusses a Tsimshian frontlet collected by I. W. Powell at Fort Simpson in 1879 (Fig. 14). The only documentation for the object is the words "moon" and "Leegaic" written on the back of it.[7] The imagery displayed on this frontlet is again an encircling ring enclosing a face with recurved beak/nose. In discussing the imagery Halpin simply refers to Duff's (1970) position that the Haida represented the moon as a bird, thus inferring that the Tsimshian may have done likewise. In view of the evidence presented here, which indicates that the Haida moon crest was obtained from the Tsimshian, it is perhaps illogical to base interpretations of the iconography of the Tsimshian moon on Haida derived information.

---

[5] According to a letter from C. F. Newcombe, May 11, 1911, on file at the Canadian Ethnology Service, Aaronson's catalogue was compiled by James Deans "mostly from guess-work."

Positive identification of the recurved, beaked creature in Haida representations of the moon is difficult to make. Two probable answers seem logical based on the evidence presented above. In the case of artifacts belonging to the R9 family, the central face with recurved beak may depict the thunderbird, a form of the Tsimshian crest figure lax'ɔ'm. When this image appears on artifacts that belong to families that claim the moon crest but not the thunderbird, its presence may simply be fortuitous, a copying of the Tsimshian artifact crest from which the Haida example derived. Conclusions concerning the identity of the hooked nose creature on Haida moon crests can only be tentative at this point, and must await investigation into the iconography of Tsimshian moon crests. Specific attention must be paid to the identity of the hooked nosed face in Tsimshian moon crests (Fig. 14). Of central importance is the relationship between the sky being who marries Gauō's daughter and the lax'ɔ'm, the crest figure given to the children of Gauō's daughter by their celestial grandfather (Boas, 1912:213). Are these two creatures the same or are they separate beings?

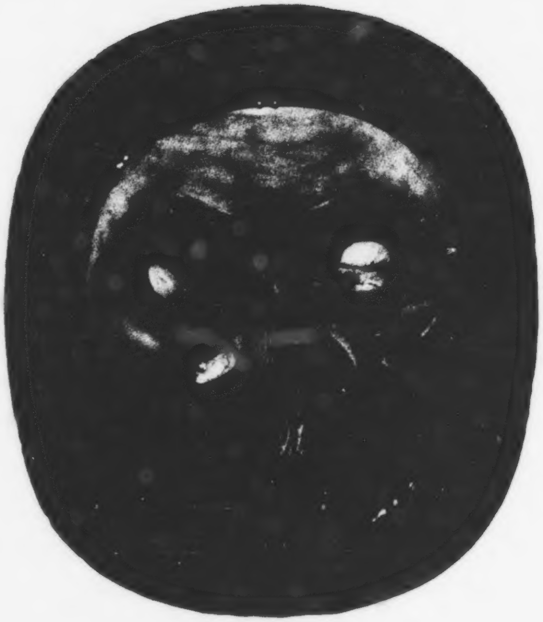


Fig. 14. Tsimshian frontlet, National Museum of Man V11-C-97, collected at Fort Simpson in 1879. (National Museums of Canada 72-4318)

---

[6] Swanton (1905:14) states that the thunderbird "... occupied a very small place in Haida thought ... They said that 'up the Stikine' they knew more about it." A contemporary Haida carver Freda Diesing (pers. comm., 1976) suggested to the author that the thunderbird was also obtained from the Tsimshian.

[7] Halpin (1973:228) notes that although Leegaic (legEx) could not claim the moon as a crest he "... may have been privileged to wear it ..." as a naxnɔ'x.

References

Barbeau, M. C.

1929 Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia. National Museum of Canada, Bull. 61, Anthro. Series 12, Canada Dept. Mines, Ottawa. 275 pp.

1950 Totem Poles, Vols. 1 & 2. National Museum of Canada, Bull. 119, Anthro. Series 30, Dept. Sect. State, Ottawa. 880 pp.

Blackman, M. B.

1973 The Northern and Kaigani Haida: a Study in Photographic Ethnohistory. Unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Ohio State Univ., Columbus. 336 pp.

Boas, F.

1912 Tsimshian Texts (New Series). Pub. of Am. Ethnological Soc. 3:65-284.

1955 Primitive Art. Dover, New York. 372 pp.

Deans, J.

1893 Haida Ethnography. Ms. Boas Coll., Provincial Archives of B.C., Victoria. unpaged.

1899 Tales from the Totems of the Hidery. Archives Int. Folklore Assoc. 2:1-94.

Duff. W.

1961 Field Note, photograph PN 5444. BCPM, Victoria.

1970 On Wardwell's "Partial Discovery of a Northwest Coast Monument." Curator 13(4):243-250.

Emmons, G. T.

1914 Portraiture Among the North Pacific Coast Tribes. Am. Anthro. 16:59-67.

Garfield, V.

n.d Field notes. Suzzallo Library, Spec. Colls., Univ. Washington, Seattle. unpaged.

Gunther, E.

1962 Northwest Coast Indian Art. Catalogue for an Exhibit at the Seattle World's Fair Fine Arts Pavillion. Seattle. 101 pp.

Halpin, M. M.

1973 The Tsimshian Crest System: a Study Based on the Marius Barbeau and William Beynon Field Notes. Unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. B.C., Vancouver. 469 pp.

Holm, B.

1967 The Northern Style—A Form Analysis, in Arts of the Raven, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver. unpaged.

Keithahn, E. L.

1963 Monuments in Cedar, Superior, Seattle. 160 pp.

Newcombe, C. F.

n.d. Field notes, Newcombe Coll., Provincial Archives of B.C., Victoria. unpaged.

Smyly, J. & C.

1973 Those Born At Koona. Hancock House, Saanichton. 119 pp.

Swanton, J. R.

1905 Contributions to the Ethonology of the Haida. Am. Museum of Nat. Hist., Memoirs 8, pt. 1:1-300.

1905a Haida Texts and Myths, Skidegate Dialect. Bureau Am. Ethnology, Bull. 29. 448 pp.

The Killer Whale Copper

A CHIEF'S MEMORIAL TO HIS SON

Wilson Duff

Reprinted from the annual report of the British Columbia Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology for 1960

In December 1960, Chief Mungo Martin put into the permanent care of the Provincial Museum his valued "copper" Ma'haynootsi "Great Killer Whale." It had been his intention to fix it to a stone monument which he had erected in Centennial Park, Courtenay, in memory of his son David, who lost his life by drowning in September 1959. However, the suggestion was made to him that it would be safer, and would make a more meaningful memorial, if it were placed on permanent exhibit in the Museum. To that he agreed.

The history of the copper was recorded on tape, with Mrs. Helen Hunt acting as interpreter. It is the purpose of this brief article to put the story into print, along with enough introductory information to give it a context. Certain sections are given verbatim from the tape, as they convey some of the eloquence of the original Kwakiutl phrasings.

Mungo Martin has risen to a high social position among his people. A member of the "real" Kwakiutl tribe of Fort Rupert, he holds at present the name Naka'penkum. He is the leading chief of the second-ranking clan of the tribe, and ranks third in the entire tribe, after Tom Johnson (Tla'kwageela) and James Knox (Tla'kodlas). At the time he purchased his copper, however, he had not yet attained such a high position of rank. His older brother, Spruce Martin, preceded him as leader of the clan and holder of the name Naka'penkum. It wasn't just the highest chiefs who could own coppers.

Coppers

"Coppers" were owned by the Indian tribes of the Coast from the Tlingit of Alaska to the Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island. Their only use, aside from the tiny ones sometimes used as ornaments on costumes, was as objects of wealth and prestige. They served, in general, as the currency of highest denomination in the complicated native systems of high finance. They were bought and sold (for ever-larger prices), given away, "broken," and even thrown into the sea as the chiefs who owned them strove for superiority by "fighting each other with property." The most important coppers had their own names—Mungo remembers the names of thirty-two others which belonged to various tribes of the southern Kwakiutl—and their histories and values were widely known.

The origin of the custom of using coppers has not been satisfactorily explained, nor has their distinctive shape. It is generally believed that coppers were used in pre-contact times, being made of native copper from sources far to the north, in Alaska. Native traditions reveal that the metal was held in very high esteem, and the first explorers to the Coast did find a small amount of it already in use in the form of weapons and ornaments. However, native copper went out of use very quickly as the traders flooded the market with sheet copper. We do not know directly of any existing "copper" which is made of the native metal.

The Copper "Ma'haynootsi"

This copper is 26 inches high and was about 13 inches across at its widest point; its size is not unusual, but its proportions are somewhat more long and narrow than most. It has been "broken" in two places. It was not uncommon for pieces to be removed from a copper in this way until only the raised T-shaped central ridge remained, and in fact this copper actually consists of an old central T riveted to a new copper-shaped sheet. The arms of the T, as was customary, form a shallow inverted V in cross-section, although they have been somewhat flattened out when riveted to the flat sheet below. The upper (larger) part of the copper is shallowly dished out from behind. The entire surface has been blackened with some type of lacquer, and a design of a killer whale has been engraved on the front.

History of the Copper

Mungo bought Ma'haynootsi from Peter Scow about 1942 for $2,010. He does not know its earlier history, except that it is an old T on a new copper, and Peter Scow had it remade in a machine-shop at Alert Bay. Willie Siwid engraved the design on it.

Most of the money which Mungo used to buy this copper was obtained in earlier transactions involving another copper. In the late 1930s, when he married Abaya (the present Mrs. Martin), her "cousin" Willie Siwid gave him many things as parts of her dowry—money, blankets, pots and pans, a Hamatsa mask and Hamatsa name, and other privileges (ki'su). In addition, he bought a copper named Tlaksoo'yala and gave that to Mungo as well. Some years later Mungo sold Tlaksoo'yala to his brother Spruce for $1,600. He kept the money and later used it to buy Ma'haynootsi.

> Mungo bought Ma'haynootsi with the thought in mind that he didn't want to put up a potlatch or winter dance without a copper for his children to dance on. Another reason was that if he died, his son would never be ashamed, but could say, "I have a copper to dance on, and for my children to dance on, through my father," and nobody could say otherwise.

The first time Mungo showed the copper in public was at the initiation of his son David into the Hamatsa "secret society":

> After Mungo had the copper to use as a shield against anyone who would say anything wrong against his family, after he had this security, then he put on a big winter dance and brought out Dave as a Hamatsa on that copper. Mungo selected one of the big chiefs, Harry Mountain, to place the copper in Dave's arms the moment he came back from being initiated, back to the tribe. Mountain made the motion of having Dave swallow the copper, tail end (small end) first. Then it was placed on the floor. Now it was said that Dave had had a feast of copper.

The copper was then "broken" for the first time:

> The chiefs of the tribes were then invited to break the copper. Not all chiefs can break copper—only the chiefs that had the right to break copper were invited. They got eagle down and put it over the copper, so that it would be perfect, and tɛ'lkʷ(tender, soft.) The chiefs all put their hands on it as Harry Mountain broke it. All the chiefs are said to have broken it because they had their hands on it.
>
> Then they got the piece off (it is the piece off the top of the copper). They gave Mungo the piece, and he gave it to Frank Walker. In that way he only returned what Frank Walker had given to his brother Spruce. Frank Walker was a Kwakiutl who had broken a copper for Spruce. They didn't want to have the name of not returning against them. This cleared that.

The next occasion on which the copper was shown in public was during the performance at Gwayastums, Gilford Island, of one of Mungo's owned ceremonies (ki'su), which he used to celebrate the coming of age and naming of a young girl in the family. The ceremony makes use of a very large decorated wooden cradle, which is hung at the back of the house. The copper was placed in the cradle as a "comforter" (blanket) for the "baby" concerned. This ceremony was repeated in Thunderbird Park in 1953, and will be described in more detail below.

The story behind the other piece "broken" from the copper is as follows:

> Mungo got quite angry at Chief Tom Omhid one time about 1944, and made all the arrangements to break his copper to give to Omhid. But after he had the piece broken off he changed his mind, because Omhid didn't have any power to do anything about it if he did give him the piece.
>
> Omhid had spoken out of hand and said that Dave was a Hamatsa without a copper. He was a Hamatsa with an empty stomach, he said. He forgot that Dave had already been filled with the copper, and that is one of the most disgraceful things to say against any Hamatsa, that he is a Hamatsa on an empty stomach. That is what angered Mungo.

Mungo disposed of the piece of copper when his brother died:

> So instead of giving it to Omhid (when he changed his mind and didn't want to hurt anybody with that piece of copper), when Spruce died, to comfort his own sorrow, he threw it in the water. He didn't want to bring up hard feelings about things that had happened years before, so he just vanished that piece with his brother. That was at Fort Rupert, when he invited the tribes to have the sa'la (mourning) for his brother.

The copper was shown again in December 1953, when it played a very prominent role in the opening ceremonies of Mungo's Kwakiutl house in Thunderbird Park. First, Mungo went through the motions of financing the event by "selling" the copper to his wife Abaya for $1,500. The cradle ceremony was performed in honour of David's daughter Dorothy, with the copper serving as her "comforter" in the large wooden cradle. The copper also appeared at times during the Hamatsa dance, carried on the arms of the Hamatsa, David Martin. The following summaries of these events are taken from the complete transcript made at the time, and now in the Museum files.

The "sale" of the copper took place, with proper speeches and ceremony, during a rehearsal on the evening before the main performance. The procedure was that Mungo "took up" (brought out) his valued copper and "sold" it to Abaya for $1,500, so that he would

The Killer Whale Copper, Ma'haynootsi.
(British Columbia Government photograph.)

have money to give away and thus show the extent of his pride in his new house. In actual fact it was Mungo's own money, and the figure included expenditures which had already been made in the preparations for the event.

Tom Omhid, who was Mungo's speaker, took up the copper and said (in part):

> This is what the chief has taken up, this that has a name, the name Ma'haynootsi. He doesn't want to take up just anything. He comes from a proud tribe. He is proud of the new house. You will recognize this house, chiefs. . . . It is a copy of the first house that all you tribes used to gather in, the house that belonged to my chief, the house of Naka penkum. . . . And now I am selling this. . . . There it is.

Omhid placed the copper on the floor. George Scow, who spoke for Abaya, picked it up and made a speech: ". . . She will take it, you chiefs. She will buy it. . . ." He placed the copper down in front of Abaya and took from her a bag of money. ". . . Now we will need your help . . . ," he said, addressing Omhid and Daniel Cranmer. Mr. Cranmer took the money and he too made a speech, praising Abaya and Mungo for what they were doing. He passed the money to Omhid, who spoke again, then handed it to Mungo.

Helen Hunt later explained the speeches:

> They were talking about the copper being brought out. It was given to Mungo by Abaya in the first place, and now Abaya has brought it back so that Mungo will have money to distribute to the people, . . . so that all the performers will not be ashamed of themselves. They will have the copper to dance on. That is the value of the dance that is going to be performed.

The cradle ceremony was performed early on the first day of the opening ceremonies, at a performance to which only Indian guests and anthropologists had been invited. It followed the set of mourning songs which had opened the performance, and preceded the dances, which were of the winter ceremonial type. The large cradle had been suspended prominently in front of the painted screen that closed off the rear of the house. The main performers grouped themselves in front of the cradle. There were strange sounds as the voices of spirits were heard from the back corners of the house. Mungo called out, as though to a baby in the cradle, not to be afraid. Then the song was sung, there were speeches, and the ceremony ended with 50-cent pieces being distributed to everyone in the house.

Omhid's speech was in the typical figurative language of Kwakiutl speeches, referring to the copper as a blanket, and to Dorothy as the new-born baby:

> The blanket to keep this child from getting cold has already been

> prepared. This man with the great name has already bought it. The softest of all blankets. Its price is enough to distribute to all you tribes. That is why it can never be cold, the new-born baby, it starts its life by keeping warm.

At other points during the 1953 ceremonies references were made to the copper. In one speech Omhid pointed to where it rested on the floor:

> This is the work of Naka'penkum. This is proof of his courage, lying right there. This belongs to the chief, and he can never fail the name of it.

But at some point Omhid must have said something that made Mungo angry, because Mungo renewed his threat to break the copper for Omhid. However, that was not done.

Mungo brought the copper out once more before David's death.

> When Dave decided to marry Robine Ferrie, of Campbell River, Mungo gave her father Johnny Ferrie $2,000 and the copper to make the ceremony big enough and known. Johnny Ferrie couldn't keep the money or the copper; he had to give it to Dave. That's what Robina carried to her husband, the copper and that money. So then the copper belonged to Dave.
>
> Mungo didn't want it to go and stay with Dave. He bought it back from him, so that Dave would have the money to throw a big potlatch. That was the last one that was at Gilford, that last winter before Dave died. That is how the copper came back to Mungo.

On the death of his son, the grieving chief determined at first to comfort himself and erase the memory of the old insult by breaking the copper for Omhid. From this he was soon dissuaded, and decided to use the copper as David's "coffin."

> For a while, Mungo wanted to cut off the T and give it to Omhid. It was just to erase the memory of the name he gave Dave when he said he was an empty stomach Hamatsa, and he wanted to get that off his mind. But the family said no, because they didn't want to shame the copper.
>
> The copper was never brought out in public again, but Mungo told different tribes that it was Dave's coffin. In the old days, he would most likely have used it as a tombstone—as you have seen in some of the old graveyards. In the olden days they placed them over the graves. It is said to be the coffin. Because it is valuable, not only for the price that was paid for it, but for the name, and all the things the copper has come through and covered for the family, and it comes to an awful lot of money. That is why he used that copper as Dave's coffin.

Earlier in the interview Mungo said that he had always tried his best to use his copper as he had been taught it should be used.

> He said that he had tried to bring it out in any kind of circumstances the way it was supposed to be brought out, right up to now. And it stopped because he lost his son. It was as far as the copper can go.

Here is another example of a subject which Duff presented as a simply objective description in the preceding article, originally published in 1961, but continued to speculate upon in a search for broader significance. In the following paper his student Martine de Widerspach-Thor enlarges upon some of her and Wilson's later ideas about Coppers and their place in Northwest Coast ceremonialism and cosmology. It is interesting to compare these observations with the independent but partly parallel ones of George MacDonald elsewhere in this volume.

D.N.A.

The Equation of Copper

IN MEMORY OF WILSON DUFF

Martine de Widerspach-Thor

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

I would like to express my gratitude to all those people who have helped in the creation of this article:

First to the late Professor Wilson Duff himself, who early in my coming from France to study in British Columbia, encouraged my attempts to understand the significance of the Copper and its importance in Northwest Coast symbolism; to Mrs. Marion Duff who very kindly lent me Professor Duff's notes on the Copper; to Drs. K. O. Burridge, Brenda Beck, Marie-Françoise Guédon, Michael Kew, my professors at the University of British Columbia who provided valuable criticisms and suggestions; to Dr. Jacqueline Fry, professor at Le Département des Arts Visuels in Ottawa for her insightful comments and to professor Bill Holm for generously making available his writings and photographic material. Further thanks are due to Marie-Françoise Guédon for having assumed the translation.

M. d W-T.

> The origin of the custom of using Coppers[1] has not been satisfactorily explained, nor has their distinctive shape. It is generally believed that Coppers were used in pre-contact times, being made of native copper from sources far to the north, in Alaska. Native traditions reveal that the metal was held in very high esteem, and the first explorers to the Coast did find a small amount of it already in use in the form of weapons and ornaments. However, native copper went out of use very quickly as the traders flooded the market with sheet copper. We do not know directly of any existing "Copper" which is made of the native metal. (Duff, 1961, 32-36; this volume, 153)

Coppers are indeed an ethnological puzzle. We know something about their multiple functions, but their origin and their unique shape are still a mystery. Few attempts have been made to interpret what, to non-Indians at least, seem strangely formed plaques of worked copper; and little if any attention has been paid by scientists to their aesthetic qualities, in contrast, for instance, to that spent on this aspect of masks. This paper presents a short history of the origin of Coppers, as we can presently infer it from the available information, summarizes various speculations about their shape, and proposes new conceptualizations based on researches of Professor Wilson Duff and the present writer.

1. *Copper as artifact/Copper as symbol*

HISTORY OF THE ARTIFACT
and myth of the native or pure Copper.

"Indian wisdom on white man's copper." (Wilson Duff's notes)

Coppers were found among Tlingit, Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Haida and Kwakiutl Indians; they do not seem to have been used by the Eyak Indians or Chugach Eskimos in the North, nor were they found among Nootka and Coast Salish Indians in the South.

Although some of his conclusions are open to question, it must be said that E. L. Keithahn (1964) has recorded and analysed the history of the metal itself, and Coppers, in a remarkable way. Mourelle (1920), La Perouse (1798), Meares (1790), Sturgis (1799), among other explorers who described the Northwest Coast, its native inhabitants and their customs, made no mention of Coppers. This is not a sufficient base to conclude that Coppers are a post-contact invention, since these explorers had only brief contact with Indians and seldom left their ships. To see Coppers they would have had to have been in attendance while potlatches were taking place. Coppers were brought out only during these festive occasions, being stored at other times in large carved chests made for that purpose.

It was Captain Lisiansky who, at Sitka, Alaska, in 1804, described a Copper for the first time. This mention is extremely important. Lisiansky brings together in a short text a series of data concerning Coppers, their origin, aesthetic and physical characteristics, socio-economic value, appearance and use, and the distinction between native copper and imported copper.

> Mr. Baranof brought with him two other curiosities one of which was a thin plate made of *virgin copper* found on the Copper River to

---

[1] Copper written with a capital C means the Copper plate, copper written with a small c means the metal.

> the north of Sitca: it was three feet in length and twenty two inches in breadth at one end and eleven inches at the other and on one side various figures were painted. These plates are only possessed by the rich, who give for one of them 20 to 30 sea-otters skins. They are carried by servants before their master on different occasions of ceremony and are beaten upon so as to serve as a musical instrument. *The value of the plate depends it seems in its being of virgin copper*: for the common ones do not bear a higher price than a single skin.
> (Lisiansky, 1814:150)

In 1891, an anthropologist, Alexander Mackenzie visited the Haida Indians on Queen Charlotte Islands. He then provides possibly the last account of an "authentic"—that is made of native metal—Copper:

> Ancient "Coppers" (Haida: *Taow*): these are the only two *antique* Coppers known among the people of Masset, and *were made before the natives procured sheet copper* from the Russians in Alaska. They have been in the possession of the same family through a long line of chiefs who displayed them on festal occasions. A chief named *Edenshaw* now long deceased used to wear them bound one to each side of his head-dress (*tsilk*) on occasions of ceremonial dances, etc . . . These Coppers were formerly of great value among the coast tribes—ten slaves or one thousand blankets being sometimes bartered for one.
> (Mackenzie, 1891:52)

Later, he adds:

> The original Coppers were brought from the northern portion of Alaska and the tradition runs that they were first made out of lumps of native copper which were found in the bed of a river there, but latterly the Indians bought sheet copper from the Russians at Sitka.
> (*Ibid.*, 52)

It should be noted here that Coppers by then were no longer valued in terms of otter skins, but in numbers of slaves or blankets. This observation, as was Lisiansky's, was made at a time when imported copper was already widely available, as is noted by Keithahn who concludes his study in these terms:

> From these accounts and others we can assume that while great quantities of sheet copper were traded on the entire Northwest Coast from 1774 to 1792 the trade was already falling off near the end of that period. From the evidence at hand it seems reasonable to assume also that none of these early traders and explorers manufactured chief's Coppers that early and there is no record that any of them ever saw one. One may also be fairly safe in assuming that none of the Indians contacted by these traders had any *tinnehs* either until after they had acquired commercial sheet copper. If this is so then there should not be a single chief's Copper in any of the museum collections of the world today that is made of native copper.
> (Keithahn, 1964:67)

To verify the composition of Coppers which are today part of the collections in European and American museums, mineralogical tests were conducted. These revealed that none of these Coppers (small or large) was actually made of native copper.[2] We may therefore conclude that the Coppers described by Alexander Mackenzie were probably also made of imported copper.[3] It seems therefore that Coppers may never have existed as native copper artifacts. Were there ever Coppers which were not made of smelted copper? Archaeological research has not revealed the existence of artifacts with a similar shape made out of stone or other material, and wooden Coppers are clearly identified as copies of "copper Coppers." Furthermore, it is not possible to give a date for the petroglyphs, samples of which can be seen in the Bella Coola area, for instance, representing the same shape. An interesting detail, however, is the fact that these Coppers usually appear in the petroglyphs side by side with engravings which probably represent cannibal spirits (Meade, 1971:29 and 31).

If Coppers made of native copper never existed, why did the owners of Coppers make such a distinction in determining the value of the Copper in question (Lisiansky, 1814:3)? The term "white-man-Copper" was used by Indians to designate Coppers with a European origin; new Coppers introduced on the feast "market" were subjected to elaborate tests to determine their nature. Among the Kwakiutl, according to George Hunt:

> If the Copper was unknown to the tribe, it was necessary to test its authenticity, i.e., was it one of native metal. Individuals were qualified as Copper-testers. They scraped the top corner of the Copper with their teeth and if the metal was soft enough to be marked in this manner this was an indication of a true native Copper. They then struck the Copper and if no ringing sound was produced this was further evidence of its authenticity.[4]
> (Hunt, n.d. 1924?)

It seems that whatever the tests showed, Coppers were all made of imported metal, whether they were accepted as authentic Copper or not. One may note also that the sound emitted by the Copper when struck is part of the test. When Lisiansky (1814:3) was describing a Copper "beaten upon as to serve as a musical instrument" was he then observing this same test or one of the effective uses of the Coppers?

---

[2] According to Witthoft and Eyman (1969), "native copper differs from smelted copper in two ways. Native copper is extremely pure, and it is made up of large crystals. Both purity and large crystal size can be produced in smelted copper by modern methods, but these techniques were not yet known in the 19th century."

[3] It would be interesting to find out what happened to the two Coppers discovered by Baranof. They might still be in the museum of Leningrad. We do not know if they have been tested. However, testing is still going on as far as the Coppers located in the U.S. are concerned: so far 125 items have been examined within 25 museums. Each of them has been found to be made of imported copper. No Copper of native metal has been found.

[4] If this passage, taken from one of the Hunt manuscripts, is interesting, it also appears suspect. Not only is the test described here not verified by the experiment itself but the information has never been confirmed by any informant during my own field research. However, the presence or absence of the ritual is not as significant as the necessary difference between the two kinds of Coppers which is alluded to by the mention of such a test, a difference which was already pointed out by Baranof and Mackenzie.

In any case, as soon as copper became easily available, people started manufacturing *false* Coppers, as is attested to by Mackenzie:

> Several natives along the Coast commenced manufacturing spurious Coppers from this material which ultimately produced a fall in the value of Coppers, and by glutting the market destroyed the romance of the idea that the copper was of earth's rarest and choicest treasures fit only to be purchased by great chiefs who desired to squander away their property for the sake of gratifying their self esteem. (Mackenzie, 1891:52)

Let us go back to the distinction made by the Indian people themselves between native copper and imported copper. This distinction cannot be explained solely from the point of view of physical components. The opposition between natural substance and artificial substance (or synthetic substance) which seems to be implied here appears as a moral opposition. Why should smelted copper be less authentic then native copper? Both are, after all, matter. Does the concept of hereditary nobility apply to matter as well as to human beings? There may exist a cultural ideology analagous to the aristocracy myth in the human order. Besides, this myth tends to weaken today as the distinction between native copper and imported copper disappears. Yet Coppers have not lost their prestige, and their metal has kept its semantic value.

Albert S. Gatschet (1899) pointed out long ago that concepts such as "real," "true" and "genuine" were used in North American Indian languages to designate superior quality or qualities. For example, in the Algonkian languages, one finds the "real mouse," the "genuine wolf." In Shawnee "real" and "authentic" are used to designate "man" and "Indian." The "red man's tobacco" of the Shawnee, called *hile'ni ltha'ma* is opposed to the whites' tobacco. Among the Kwakiutl, to return to the Pacific Coast, one distinguishes the "real Kwakiutl" from the other tribes, an expression one could translate as "the Kwakiutl par excellence." Furthermore, the Kwakiutl literature is full of these expressions, often synonymous. One often hears of, for instance, "the real supernatural one" (Boas, 1910:6-7), "the great supernatural power," "the real supernatural power" (*k'e'sxolas alaEm nan'alakwa*). The connotation of real and authentic is expressed by the suffix *-kyas* in *kwakwala*. In Niska, a Tsimshian dialect *-sem-* may be translated by "real," "true," "truly," and *semgiget* (from *ga't*: man) means "real man," that is, nobleman.[5]

So the terms meaning "real" or "authentic" imply a definite kind of value; they denote a *maximal* value. They mean that the Copper so defined *by its excellence* fulfills all the conditions required of a perfect Copper. In fact such a Copper should not only be recognized as made of native copper (that is untouched by white technology, its authenticity referring to a cultural meaning) but also validated by name and a history.

> Each of the genuine old Coppers had an individual name such as:
> *Taow-ken-oos* "the Copper that steals all the people."
> *Yen-an-tous* "the Copper that is like a cloud."
> *Len-ah-taous* "the Copper that must needs be fathomed."
> These names served to perpetuate the identity of the Copper when it changed hands, and were used in referring to it in the traditions of the people. (Mackenzie, 1891:52)

The significance of the opposition "native, real or authentic Copper," versus "imported or false" must therefore be examined at the semantic level. It does not simply concern the physical components of the metal, but also its semantic aspects. We can now attempt to explain why the authenticity, the purity of the Copper was so important.

Copper was the only metal considered precious at the time when the first Europeans arrived on the Northwest Coast. It seems to us that the Indian chiefs were trying to preserve the intrinsic qualities of the native metal. These had to do with the scarcity of the metal, its strength and capacities as a workable material, its colour and smell (Kwakiutl mythology often refers to the smell of copper as being like that of salmon, for instance), its provenance from an outer realm kept secret while the mythical origins of the plate were numerous and diversified whether one is among the Kwakiutl, Haida, Tlingit or Tsimshian,[6] its properties of curing disease when used by Tlingit, Haida and Kwakiutl shamans.[7] All these physical and symbolic qualities of the metal establish its dominance as a major item in the symbolic system. In a way, the presence of imported copper was to reinforce the qualities of the native copper. Confronted by "artificial" copper and threatened by it with de-mystification, the natural copper was not permitted to disappear so easily. Instead, the Indian people found ways to preserve and emphasize the integrity of copper, the "real copper," so as to keep its role intact in the symbolic universe. Charging the new copper with all the symbolic qualities of the pure metal, as through a transfusion, a complex process took place, leading to diffusion and cultural re-integration. The result was the "real Copper," or at least the myth of the Copper in native metal. Mysteries surrounded copper: its origin was kept secret,[8] so was the associated technology, and the manufacture of the shield itself. Who were the first Copper-makers? The Haida, as Mackenzie supposes (1891:52), or the Tlingit, as proposed by Dawson (1880: 135B) and Krause (1956:148)? All these uncertainties have fed the mystery and therefore the authenticity of the Coppers. From the natural copper replaced by the imported "artificial" copper was born the cultural copper in which were joined the qualities of both. Surpassing its first function, this natural copper symbolically present in the Copper plate achieved a new function and became a major symbol in the universal sign system.

---

[5] These idiomatic expressions are still in use today. One speaks, for instance, of "real clams" in contrast to canned clams.

[6] "By Kwakiutl tradition Coppers were present at the time of the myth people. One of the sources of Coppers to the ancestors of the Kwakiutl, was *Qomoqwa*, the chief of the undersea world, whose other name is *Tlaqwagila*, "Copper-Maker." Qomoqwa stories and others describing the acquisition of Coppers during mythical times show that the Kwakiutl believed that the concept of the Copper did not originate (at least for them) in the North, although they do claim many dances and privileges from marriage and war contacts with northern tribes. Furthermore, the Kwakiutl also admit to having purchased Coppers from northerners." (Holm, 1975, ms:6)

[7] "A disease may be terminated by enclosing it in copper. Then shredded cedar bark containing some perspiration, saliva, or other bodily waste is wrapped in copper and driven into the trunk of a tree under which twins are buried. In enclosing the cedar bark in sheet copper, the edges are hammered over so as to close it as tightly as possible. Four such coppers are driven into the grave tree." (Boas, 1966:377)

natural copper — artifical copper — cultural copper

The parody of the Copper testing (if it ever really existed), as a rule in a symbolic game, had a purpose: to reinstate Copper in its ideal original place, that is in a mythical inaccessible time and space. The myth of Coppers made from the native material can be read as a device to convert the "objective" world of reality into the "subjective" world of concepts and so to re-interpret it accordingly.

2. *Copper as an object: shape-object*

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS/PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

If the size of Coppers varies greatly from the small pendants hanging from dance aprons to the massive Tlingit plates, the Copper shape always follows the same pattern.[9]

> Incurvée au sommet et à la base, avec des côtés se rapprochant en oblique depuis le haut jusqu'à la partie médiane un peu étranglée, puis divergeant légèrement ou restant parallèle en dessous. Le registre superieur porte un décor souvent très riche représentant un animal vu de face, ou son visage. Presque rectangulaire et sans ornement le registre inférieur ou "l'arrière-train" montre seulement deux arêtes perpendiculaires martelées en relief, rappelant le motif "chef-pal" dans la langue du blason: l'une horizontale au niveau ou les côtés obliques se rapprochent le plus, l'autre verticale depuis le chef jusqu'à la base du Cuivre, en quoi l'on peut voir une sorte d'écusson. (Lévi-Strauss, 1975(2): 108)

The most usual metaphor used to describe Copper is a shield. The two perpendicular ridges are most often defined as the letter T. Mackenzie, for example, describes a Haida Copper as follows:

> A conspicuous mark was always on these, the (T) cross, and on the skill with which this was executed depended in a great measure the value of the Copper. It was hammered when fashioned on a pattern by a peculiar process known only to skillful workers with the result that when the *taow* was finished the identation of the T was of the same thickness as the rest of the Copper-plate. If this T proved thinner the value was considerably diminished, in fact the Copper was considered not genuine. (Mackenzie, 1891:53)

RANGE OF DISPERSION

The range of dispersion of an object may be defined here as the set of all these different modes of execution of the theme formed by this object which do not lead to a change in meaning. The range of dispersion of Coppers seems to be restricted to two shapes. The first one is the one generally known (Figure 1); the second is mentioned by Frederica de Laguna (1972):

> "At Yakutat, I was told that 'Coppers' were apparently not made in the shape of a shield, the traditional form farther south, but were shaped 'like bow ties.' That is the plate was narrowed in the middle, the two sides flared out, and the ends, of equal or almost equal width were bluntly pointed." (Figure 2)

Old Coppers were not polished but blackened by some kind of process which was supposed to be kept secret by Copper Makers,

> . . . in a black coating said to have been derived in some instances at least from smoking in a spruce gum fire. (Keithahn, 1964:59)
>
> This blackening effectually prevented corrosion. (Mackenzie, 1891:52)

The upper portion was often painted or incised with the representation of an animal or sometimes its face only, probably a clan crest or ancestral symbol of the first owner. This iconography seems to hold a secondary importance: some figures followed the purest traditional style while others ignored it and appear almost crude.

---

[8] We can now say that the Tlingit had a virtual monopoly on all native copper trade and that they believe the Atna Indians (inhabiting the Copper River valley in Alaska) were at once the originators or discoverers of the metal itself and of the technology needed to work it (Sacheck, 1973).

[9] It would be interesting to discuss to what extent the original shape of imported copper has influenced the shape of ceremonial Coppers.

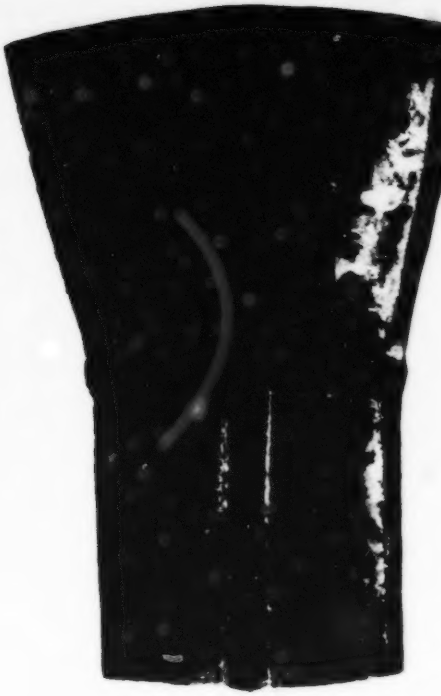


Figure 1. Haida Copper, Beaver Design. (British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1396)

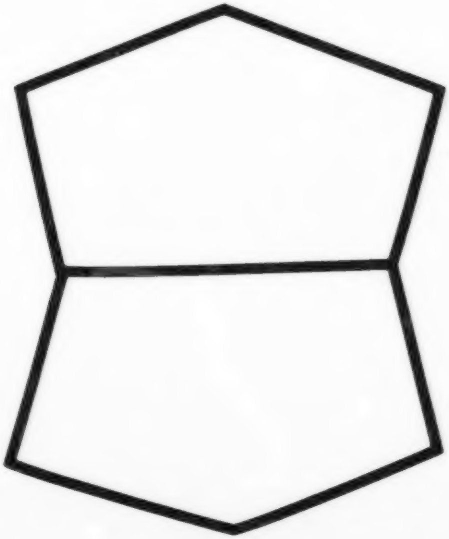


Figure 2.

Very often the bilateral symmetry of these applied designs reinforced this quality in the whole object and emphasized its frontal aspect. It would be very interesting to study the related domain of all the gestures associated with Copper handling. In Kwakiutl rituals there are different ways of holding a Copper according to the ceremonial context of its presentation, as well as, maybe, in relation to the Copper itself. The vertical position (head up) seems to be the one most often used. Mackenzie has moreover noticed the name of a Haida Copper, *Taow-kee-ass*, meaning "the Copper standing in a perpendicular way" (Mackenzie, 52). Boas and Hunt also mention that "when the Copper is turned face down in the sea, the Kwakiutl say, it becomes night. Turned face up, it restores daylight" (Boas-Hunt, 1905:145).

3. *Speculation on a shape: symbol-object*

To see an object in space means to see it in context. The experience has shown that it is easier to describe an item in comparison with other items rather than by itself. To perceive is first of all to compare. So it is for Coppers. The earlier interpretations we found in the literature brought with them a rather common set of metaphors: shield, armor, gong, large size arrowhead, money. The shape of the object is then made explicit in these cases by its supposed function or, more allegorically, by the function of its supposed meaning. The arrow comparison was presented and expanded by Keithahn (1964:78) who wrote that the Copper is "a 'blow-up' of a treasured copper arrowhead from the Interior." This could be linked to linguistic considerations. The word *eek*, meaning copper in the Tlingit language, could have been originally the same as *Eyak*, the term designating the Eyak Indians living formerly at the mouth of the Copper River. The copper plates are called *tinneh* in Tlingit, a name which is close enough to the terms used by the northern Athapaskans to designate themselves: *Tinne, Dene, Dine* and so on, according to different locations. However, the Tlingit did not use the term *Tinneh* to designate their Athapascan neighbours, but rather called them *go-nana*. Keithahn, asking himself the reason for the presence of the world *Tinneh* in Tlinglit, believed he had found the solution in a Tlingit myth relating the story of a young but highly successful hunter:

> He always took bow and arrows with him. They are called *dina*. Applying this name to the copper point alone we may have discovered the prototype of the entire production of chief's Coppers produced after the introduction of commercial copper plate. The story of *Kakaeqte* concerns a Hoonah man who crossed the glaciers to the Interior and was discovered by *Go'nana* while roasting

> fish on sticks. He escaped the *Go'nana*, ate the fish but left copper-tipped arrows where each roasting stick had been.
> (Keithahn, 1964:77)

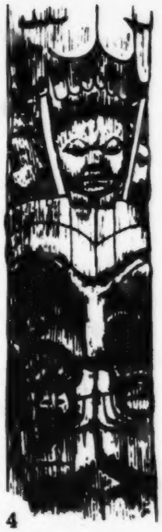
The episode ends with a baffling comment: "This was the first time a Tlingit had seen Copper." It is baffling because the same story goes into other episodes (which Keithahn does not mention), in which the hero teaches the Athapascans some of the Tlingit techniques and gives them a few small Coppers, then goes back with them to his native village on the Coast. Then *L'uk'nAxadl* saw they had Coppers and took them away. Apparently, according to the narrative, the Athapascan hunter already knew about Coppers, and so did the Tlingit. Bill Holm (pers. comm.) mentioned another Tlingit legend related by Swanton in which a young man hammering a Copper plate (*Tinneh*) offers it to a girl who does not recognize the object—for "no person in the world had ever seen Copper" (Swanton, 1909:259). Furthermore, this second tale shows that the Tlingit did not always associate the origin of Copper with the arrowhead episode.

Another author, Waterman, did not need a long demonstration to present an hypothesis, first expressed by his Tlingit informants, according to which the shape of a Copper represents the forehead of mythical *Gonəqadet*. Several coastal groups believed in such a supernatural monster of the sea and the tides. *Gonəqadet* lives at the bottom of the sea. He brings power and wealth to those lucky enough to see him, wealth most often realized in the form of Coppers and abalone shells. Sometimes, he emerges from the water in the shape of a big house all painted and decorated with abalone shells, or else as an enormous war canoe also elaborately painted. As a figure, he is graphically represented with an enormous head, two arms, legs and fins (Figure 3). Waterman's hypothesis is reinforced by the detail of a Kaigani totem pole located in Kasaan (Figures 4 and 5) (no Tlingit example has been mentioned yet), which Waterman describes as follows:

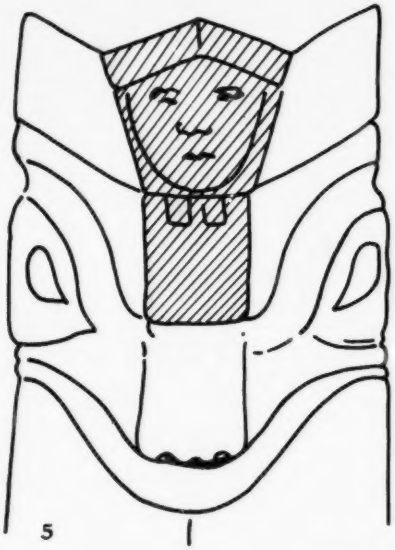
> The rectangular part of the Copper (the lower part) represents his frontal bone. The flaring part of the Copper represents the space between the monster's ears. The "face" which is usually painted on this part of a Copper represents the monster's animal head band. After looking at representations of the *Gonəqadet* it can be stated with assurance that either the form of the *Gonəqadet*, or the forehead of the *Gonəqadet* has assumed the likeness of a Copper. My Tlingit informants felt that the form of the Coppers symbolised the forehead of the wealth-giving monster, the prodigy whom they had heard about in their mythical tales. (Waterman, 1923:451)

Another example is given by a mask, supposedly representing *Gonəqadet* emerging from the water, originating

Figure 3. Haida model of memorial crest, Gonaqadet. (British Columbia Provincial Museum, 238)



4



5

Figure 4. Detail of Haida totem pole at Kasaan, Alaska. (Drawn by N. Condrashoff from photograph)

Figure 5. Sketch by T. T. Waterman (Fig. 64 in "Some Conundrums in Northwest Coast Art," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 25, pp. 435-451, 1923) to illustrate the relationship of the Copper to Gonaqadet's forehead (redrawn).

from the same village and now located at the Museum of Cultural History at the University of California at Los Angeles. On this mask the head of the water monster is framed by small wooden strips suggesting the structure of a house front and resembling the upper part of a Copper (Figure 6).

However, as Claude Lévi-Strauss pointed out in disputing Waterman's hypothesis:

> On ne peut généraliser à partir d'un seul exemple et même si on en trouvait d'autres, on serait incapable de dire si la forme des Cuivres en dérive ou s'ils se sont au contraire inspirés d'elle.
> (Lévi-Strauss, 1975: II p. 109)

Bill Holm has recently pointed out Boas' attempt to explain the Copper shape (Holm, 1975 ms:5-9). He wrote:

> In 1927 Franz Boas, probably inadvertently, put a prop under the forehead theory of the origin of the Copper, when he described a bent-corner bowl in his *Primitive Art* (1955: figures 274 and 283f). This bowl, in the American Museum of Natural History, is decorated with a carving representing a beaver. Boas noted a design between the eyes in the "form of one of the conventional copper plates." That it resembles a Copper there can be no argument, but that it represents a Copper can be easily refuted. (Figure 7)

According to Bill Holm:

> ...it is a rather typical secondary and tertiary complex of U forms elaborating a space resulting from the juxtaposition of the two massive formline ovoids around the eyes of the beaver. These formlines were unrecognized by Boas in his description as can be shown by his reference to the "disconnected eyes, mouth and ear" (p. 274). The upper edge of the Copper-like design is concave rather than convex as in a Copper, which is as it should be since it is developed from the resultant form of these interconnected formlines, and it lacks a T-shaped ridge. That part of the design which resembles the T ridge of the Copper is actually made up of the edges of the secondary and tertiary forms which go together to make up this little complex.

Wilson Duff was searching for another solution to the Copper enigma, something that would follow or include Waterman's idea and, in a way, bring it to completion while starting from the hypothesis that the shape of the Copper originated with the Tlingit. Duff thought that the shape was linked to the *Gonəqadet* figure, but explained this link neither through the detail of a pole nor through the mention of a mask but rather by reference to the design decorating Haida cedar chests. In his terms, "chests explain and contain Coppers." One of the main figures represented on the chest was a sea monster equated with *Gonəqadet* himself. "If the Copper is actually *Gonəqadet*'s forehead," he proposed, "let us attempt to find the Copper in the structure of the design." So doing, Duff

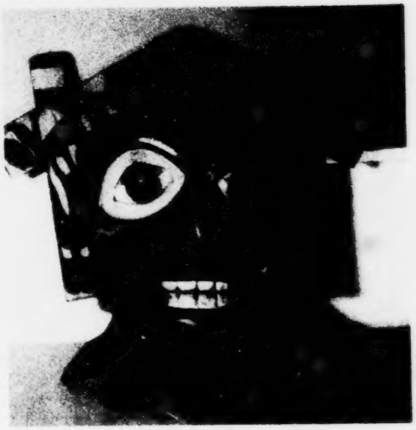


Figure 6. Mask from Kasaan in University of California at Los Angeles Museum of Cultural History X65-4380. (George MacDonald photo)

Figure 7. Bowl in American Museum of Natural History 19/953. (Bill Holm photo)

discovered that a shape identical to Copper may be obtained by re-uniting what he calls the "inner-half" of the monster's face (Figure 8 before and after). This mental operation is indeed the result of a "new way of halving the double." The Copper could then be considered as the product of an act wholly on the mental level, which would be well in keeping with a tendency of the northern Northwest Coast art to create "pure forms." Emptied of all iconographic content, the Copper, as some other forms (the ovoid, for instance), is reduced to its own "armature," to use his terms. And, as Duff adds, the Copper may well have been invented once and only once, in Chilkat Tlingit country, approximately toward the time of the first contact with the Europeans, and then have travelled rapidly all along the Coast, acquiring new interpretations on its way (Wilson Duff, notes).

However, all chests do not have the same structure in terms of designs as the one Wilson Duff chose and again as for Waterman's hypothesis we cannot generalize from a single example. Lévi-Strauss' observation on Waterman's hypothesis is also valid for Wilson Duff's interpretation.

In a vast comparative study of the origin myths of the Dzonokwa and Xwexwe Kwakiutl masks on one hand and the Swaihwe Salish masks on the other, Claude Lévi-Strauss has recently emphasized the parallelism linking the Copper and the Swaihwe figure at both the sociological and artistic or plastic levels. A physical ressemblance had already been noted by Wingert in 1949:

> In this connection a similarity should be noted between the proportions of the lower and upper parts of the mask and those of the Coppers of the north. The vertical striping of the lower part of both objects is the same. The Coppers were also symbols of privilege as well as of great monetary value in their own right.
> (Wingert, 1949:60, n.72) (Figure 9)

The results of his comparative work allowed Lévi-Strauss to go much further. Among the Salish, the Swaihwe masks are interchangeable with the Copper since identical myths account for their respective origin (Lévi-Strauss, 1970:70). Among the Kwakiutl, the origin of the Copper goes back to Dzonokwa, whose mask reverses the Swaihwe mask from a plastic point of view while both masks retain the same function from a semantic point of view. Furthermore, the semantic function is reversed when one goes from the Salish Swaihwe to the Kwakiutl Xwexwe, but in this case the two masks are similar from a plastic point of view (Lévi-Strauss, 1977:112). Lévi-Strauss therefore concludes, on page 112:

> Si les Cuivres offrent l'aspect général des masques Swaihwe, c'est

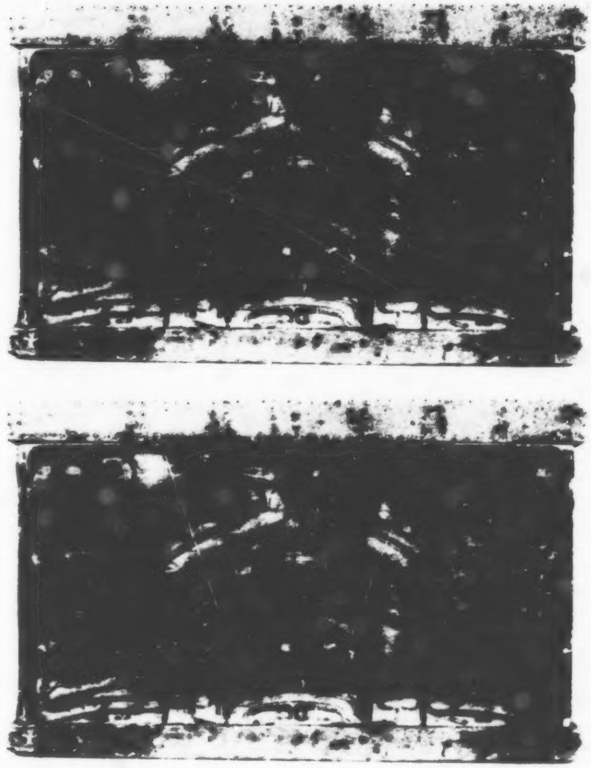


Figure 8.(A & B) Haida chest in University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology A-8211. (University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology photo)

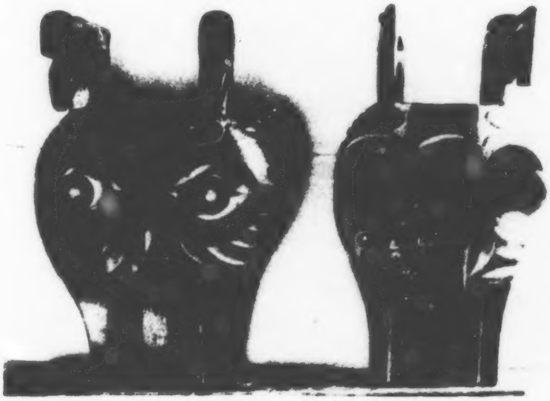


Figure 9. Cowichan Swaihwe masks. (British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1396)

> que chez les Kwakiutl ils en tiennent lieu. . . . Les Cuivres et les masques Swaihwe constituaient deux solutions parallèles aux mêmes problèmes.

and on page 116:

> . . . Car si chez les Salish, le Swaihwe est le moyen d'acquérir la richesse, nous croyons avoir établi que, chez les Kwakiutl, les Cuivres—richesses suprêmes—sont la métaphore du Swaihwe.

That is, the Copper among the Kwakiutl has somewhat the same form as the Swaihwe mask because they have the same function, Coppers and masks being two parallel solutions to the same problem. Among the Salish, the Swaihwe is a way to gain wealth, while among the Kwakiutl the Copper as the supreme symbol of wealth becomes a metaphor for the Swaihwe. Indeed, if the Swaihwe is not a Copper, it is a means for its acquisition. So, according to the author, the Swaihwe figure and the Coppers are the result of a parallel evolution originating from the same set of themes. The Swaihwe masks are the equivalent of the Coppers for the Salish—who do not have Coppers, while in the north the Coppers are a substitute for the Swaihwe figure. Conceived from a different material and style, the Coppers are a transposition at the plastic level of the Swaihwe, while their social role and philosophical meaning remain identical. Lévi-Strauss then attempts a historical reconstitution of the transfer of Swaihwe masks from the Salish communities to the Kwakiutl familes which he concludes with the following remark:

> Cette reconstitution historique est plausible mais comme tous les effets qu'elle implique étaient déjà observables à la fin du XIX ème siècle, une diffusion récente du Swaihwe laisserait un temps bien court pour que les choses aient pu se passer de cette façon. Nous préfèrerions supposer, soit que, l'existence de la diffusion du masque remontent à une époque plus ancienne que les traditions locales ne le suggèrent, soit que sous la forme qu'on leur connait, les Cuivres et les Swaihwe perpetuent chacun à leur façon une tradition archaique dont nous ignorons quel put être le support matérial . . . (Lévi-Strauss, 1977:116)

He proposes two hypotheses here: that there is either a much older date than suggested by the local traditions for the existence and diffusion of the Swaihwe mask, or there was a separate archaic form, the material evidence for which remains unknown, which is perpetuated in different ways by the Copper and the Swaihwe.

However, in a recent study "Les Dessous d'un Masque" (1977) (Hinterland of a mask) Claude Lévi-Strauss has noted "that the mythology of the Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit also includes several motifs pointing to the Swaihwe complex. So far, this complex had been considered as belonging exclusively to sundry groups of the Salish stock on the Coast of British Columbia and Vancouver Island." But he then shows "that it could well have diffused northward or, as a more likely hypothesis, that the Salish may have shaped it out of a patrimony of mythical representations common to all people of the Northwest Pacific Coast." This study allowed Lévi-Strauss to conclude his study in these terms:

> Mieux vaut donc reconnaître que l'origine première du Swaihwe, et même son évolution dans un passé récent, restent obscures. L'analogie de forme et de fonction que, dans la Voie des Masques, nous avons révélée entre ce masque Salish et les Cuivres Tsimshian, des Haida et des Tlingit complique encore le problème. Replacée dans la perspective de la présente étude, l'opinion recueillie d'informateurs Tlingit par Waterman selon laquelle les Cuivres imiteraient la forme d'un enfant reposant sur le front d'un esprit marin, pourrait avoir une portée plus grande que celle d'une simple référence à un monument figuré. Car, tout au long d'une discussion sur l'origine du Swaihwe, et par implication des Cuivres, nous avons rencontré le motif de l'enfant flottant ou soutenu par esprit des eaux. (Lévi-Strauss, 1977:24)

These hypotheses open doors leading to new approaches and possible interpretation.

In the following pages, I will attempt to develop my own summary and hypothesis, relying to a certain extent on relevant information in Kwakiutl ethnography.

An object placed in a symbolic context reveals at least two messages, an aesthetic one and a semantic one. By aesthetic, I mean "expression" and the means for such, and by semantic, I mean "meaning."

According to much testimony collected from north to south, the Copper refers to and expresses a human-like body. This is important, the more so as other artistic representations (totem poles, two dimensional designs, dance costumes, etc.) in this whole area emphasize the head, both face and profile, while arms and legs are considered secondary. Body and head are often given similar proportions in the carving of Kwakiutl and Haida heraidic poles, for example.

The chest and Chilkat blanket designs both centre around a face. The central and most important part of the Copper is the field for the face of the being represented while the two lateral parts are fields for the limbs. (The three sets of objects are further linked by the fact that Coppers were kept in chests and evaluated up to ten slaves or a thousand blankets.) The same tripartite structure is also visible in the carved wooden frontlets and in the soul-catcher charm (Figure 10).

At the linguistic level, the same association between Copper and a living being is evidenced, although the terms designating the Copper may refer to another meaning such as the reddish colour of the metal. Only in Kwakiutl, for instance, the same morpheme *tlak̲wa* applies to the metal, to the object and to the colour red.[10]

Again in the Kwakiutl language, the different parts of a Copper are named as if it were a living body: the upper part is called *o'nuxLEme*, that is the face—this is the field containing the design of the face of an animal or other being, when the Copper is decorated with such a representation. The lower part is called *qa'la's*, a term difficult to translate but which has to do with the ribs. One often sees a series of oblique lines starting from the central vertical ridge and going down toward each side, a good representation of the thoracic cage. Another term sometimes used for the lower part is *bEx̲us'o* literally meaning "piece of man," that is skeleton or trunk of the body. These terms are still in use today.

In the Haida language, the term for Copper, *taow*, is said to mean "property above anything else" and the T ridge is called *taow-tsoo-eh* which literally means "backbone of the taow." The T ridge appears to have an importance of its own. In the "breaking of a Copper" ceremony, the Copper is broken in such a way as to leave the T intact (Figures 11a and b). One could often see such T-shaped pieces of Copper nailed to "tree graves," maybe to symbolize the soul of the chief buried there. Among Haida, the T shaped Copper, or remains of a Copper was important enough to be mentioned by Deans (1886):

> *Tau* or *Taw* Copper . . . T is used as a cross amongst the Haida tribes . . . . When the Haidas built a house they used to put a number of T's on the walls in order to insure wealth and prosperity.

Sculptured figures of men sometimes incorporate the *gE'lEm* (the ribs) in the form of painting or carving on the chest. In some cases the design is inverted so that the cross bar covers the collar bones, while the vertical bar runs up the throat. The integration of the T of the Copper with the sculptured anatomy is significant (Figure 12).

With an anatomical structure, so to speak, defined in these terms, Coppers seem to be built according to a condensed scheme of human or animal beings (both being rather close since in a not too distant mythical time, in native thinking, man and animal could exchange shape and communicate with each other). At a more allegorical level, they could be considered a metaphor for the human body.

If Coppers do derive from anthropomorphic considerations, some of their other qualities are not less human in nature. As if they were human individuals of a noble rank, Coppers had names, in some cases evolving from the form of the faces which were painted or shallowly engraved on them.

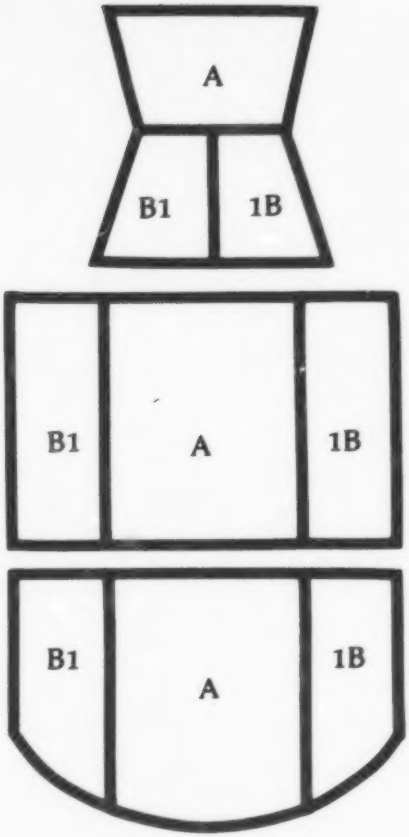


Figure 10.

---

[10] The following chart indicates the terms used in several coastal Indian languages for these three items.

	Copper plate	Copper as metal	red colour
Kwakiutl	*tlak̲wa*	*tlak̲wa*	*tlak̲wa*
Tlingit	*tinneh*	*yek*	
Tsimshian	*ha yatash*	*mEsin*	*mEs*
Haida	*taow*	*x̲Al*	

11.(A)

11.(B)

Figures 11. Broken coppers. 11.(A) - Gloria Huntington collection, Seattle. (Bill Holm photo) 11.(B) - National Museum of Man VII E430. (National Museum photo #J7888)

Figure 12. (University of British Columbia Museum A17148)

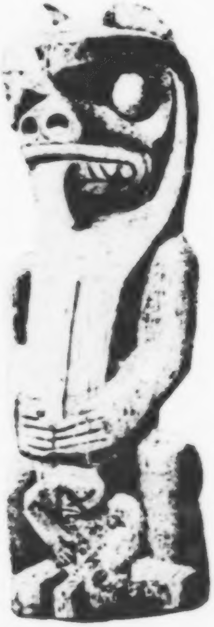


Figure 13. Figure in American Museum of Natural History 16/8250. Reproduced from Boas, 1909, *The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island*. Plate XLVIII, #4.

> "These were not always human faces. If they represented birds or sea-creatures, the lateral fields were often decorated with wing feathers or fins, rather than with ribs. The analogy to the body is still present; the name given it often suggests that the whole Copper represents the animal for which it is named. For example, *NEnqEmala*, 'having the face (or the appearance) of the grizzly bear.' The concept is graphically portrayed in a powerful carving on a housepost from Quatsino Sound in which a grizzly merges with a Copper. His head appears in the usual place in full relief while the lower part of the Copper forms the bear's body" (Figure 13) (Holm, 1975, ms:9).

Legends legitimize the origins and titles of Coppers and follow them. However, unlike the human chiefs who have to change names or titles as they grow older, Coppers retain their own and unique names. Wilson Duff mentions in his article "the Killer-Whale Copper" that

> Mungo remembers the name of thirty two others [Coppers] which belonged to various tribes of the Southern Kwakiutl—and their histories and values were widely known.
>
> (Duff, 1961:32; this volume, 132)

It is in the simplest and most direct representations of the Copper that the resemblance to a human torso is most apparent. Especially when these are generalized Copper designs, and do not refer to specific named Coppers, they depict simple, diagramatic human faces with T-shaped "backbone" and ribs. There are many examples, in button blankets, Coppers on carved poles and house fronts, pictographs on rocks, and so on (Figures 14, 15, 16 and 17).

There are also representations of men, not on Kwakiutl Coppers, which are sufficiently like the stylized Copper-man to make the concept even more plausible. A few samples among the many cases suffice by way of illustration. In a Tsimshian appliqué shirt with the design of a man, the body with its ribs suggests the bottom half of a Copper, and the head, with Copper-like corners, resembles the top half (Figure 18).

As Bill Holm has pointed out:

> By far the most striking human designs suggesting Coppers on the Northwest Coast are from an area where there are no Coppers at all. It is interesting to include them also, not to suggest that they were the actual ancestors of that mysterious plaque, but that they are examples of a basic, ingenious way of representing the human torso which, with variation, was coast-wide in ancient times. These examples are from the Chinook of the Columbia River and their upriver Salish and Sahaptian neighbours. Some of them are actually from the Plateau, but because of the river their makers had

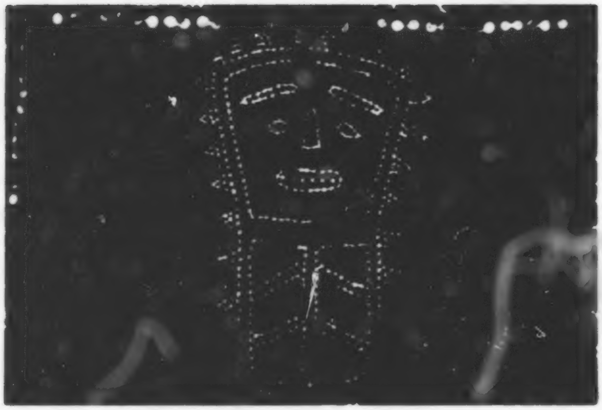


Figure 14. Button blanket in Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum 25.0/274. (Bill Holm photo)

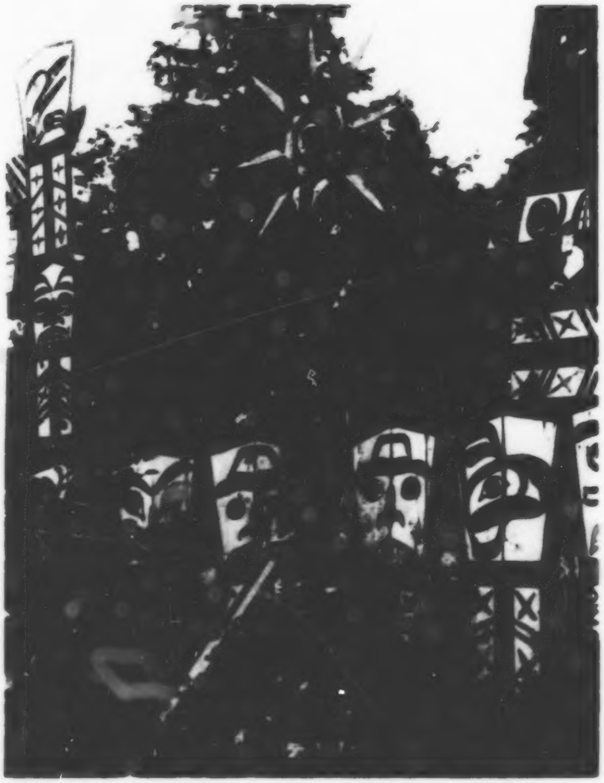


Figure 15. Alert Bay graveyard. (British Columbia Provincial Museum photo 8544)

Figure 16. Button blanket, Wellington collection, Montana. (Howard Roloff photo)

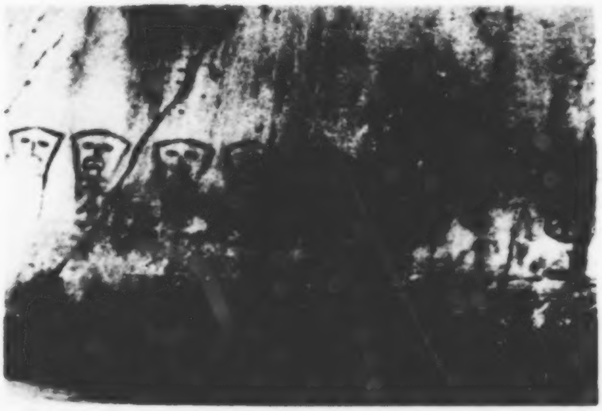


Figure 17. Pictographs at Petley point, B.C. (F. J. Barrow photo, British Columbia Provincial Museum)

> close contact with coastal cultures. The figures are on carved bowls of mountain sheep horn and on the rim flanges of mortars carved of trees' burls. They are almost more "Coppers" than men.
>
> (Holm, 1975, ms:9) (Figures 19, 20 & 21)

Do these human physical characteristics play any role in the rituals concerning Coppers? We know that Coppers were a major item in the social and economic aspects of the feasts, and many anthropologists have emphasized the economic role of Coppers as they recognized there a transaction comparable to banking operations in the modern world. But the symbolic and religious role of Copper seems equally important.

Among the northern tribes, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Bella Coola and northern Kwakiutl, Coppers were associated with funerary rituals. Following the death of a chief or important member of the community, a Copper was placed on his grave, or was broken in his honour, and the pieces, distributed among other chiefs, were said to symbolize his bones and solidified blood (Mackenzie, 1891:52; Emmons, 1942).

It is, however, among the Kwakiutl that the examples illustrating a link between Copper and human body are to be mostly found, according to the available literature and as verified by information gathered during my own field work in the Kwakiutl area. Again, this does not necessarily mean that the shape of a Copper is based on a Kwakiutl tradition. It points to the possibility of the Copper not having been created in the northern areas, in spite of Keithahn's, Mackenzie's and Duff's hypotheses.

One of the most striking characteristics of Kwakiutl funerary and initiation rituals is the repeated analogy between the Copper and slave. One custom frequently mentioned in the literature concerning the northern Pacific Coast is placing a slave in the bottom of the hole prepared for the erection of a totem pole.

> It seems that in olden times slaves were sometimes killed and buried under the house posts or under totem poles. Later on, instead of being killed, they were given away as presents. Whenever this was done, the inverted figure of a man, or an inverted head, was placed on the pole. In other cases Coppers were buried under the posts, or given away. This custom still continues, and in all such cases Coppers are shown on the post, often in such a way that they are being held or bitten by the totem animals. At the time of the initiation of a member of the clan, slaves were also killed and Coppers were destroyed . . . (Boas, 1966:98)

As suggested by Boas (Boas, 1966:98), it seems that the destruction of a possession of such great value as a slave enhanced the value of the pole and the prestige of his owner. In more recent times, the slave was replaced by a Copper or by Copper pieces, a simple but notable substitution of the human body by a Copper.

In her work on the Kwakiutl potlatch, Helen Codere (1950) has demonstrated how the Kwakiutl people solved their conflicts by means of potlatches, these being substitutes for the intertribal wars that had been forbidden by the advent of Europeans. It is therefore possible to admit a logical evolution in a parallel manner for Coppers which became substitutes for the bodies of slaves or captives no longer available. Boas, in a description of a Koskimo ceremonial describes how such a subsitituion could take place:

> Each man carries as many hemlock wreaths as he had killed enemies during war expeditions. ... Then they step up to the middle of the house and throw one wreath after the other into the fire, calling the name of the enemy whom it represents. This ceremony is called *yi'lxoa* which means placing the head of an enemy on a pole. At present the wreaths represent the number of Coppers which a man has given away. They have taken the place of heads because according to the usages of the Kwakiutl, a man who has given away a Copper by doing so becomes a victor over his rival.
>
> (Boas, 1897:522)

A still older observation by Lord completes and verifies Boas' remark: "Heads were taken and tied to tall poles in front of the villages of the victors" (Lord, 1866, V.I.:171). Later, heads were to be replaced by Coppers hanging "head-down." These Coppers were sometimes made of wood.

The same substitution is evidenced in the hamatsa ritual. During the taming dance, the hamatsa dancer carries a robe usually made of bear skin called *LEnsEm* on the back of which miniature skeletons and skulls are attached. These, which are made of various materials and may vary from knitted woollen skulls to skulls of carved wood painted white, are supposed to suggest the many corpses eaten by the hamatsa while he was still a cannibal being (Boas, 1966:233; Holm, 1975:7). On some of the hamatsa robes, however, the skulls are replaced with small Coppers hanging "head down." In the same ritual, a real Copper is held in front of the hamatsa as a substitute for the corpse or mummy which used to be his traditional food. This Copper was sometimes exhibited during the initiates' dances and was considered the only food through which a hamatsa could be tamed. Boas describes such a man dancing with a piece of a Copper in his teeth, a Copper being then the supreme food of the highest initiate (Boas-Codere, 1966:240). According to Bill Holm (1975, ms.:7) this corresponds to an important phase of the ritual: "at the precise moment when the hamatsa is fed, he squats on the ground and another man, usually his initiatory father, comes to him with a Copper which is presented to the mouth of the initiate. It is then announced that as the hamatsa has been fed and is satiated, the taming dance may start. Although this phase has

Figure 18. Coat in Skeena Treasure House (now 'Ksan). (Bill Holm photo)

Figure 19. Bowl, Oregon Historical Society, Portland. (Bill Holm photo)

Figure 20. Wooden mortar, Alan Backstrom collection, Seattle. (Bill Holm photo)

Figure 21. Sheephorn bowl, Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum. (Bill Holm photo)

been slowly eliminated, pieces of Copper are still sometimes referred to as *ha'mesa hamatsa* or hamatsa food. This is considered a warning that anyone speaking against hamatsa or his sponsor will receive that piece as a challenge. There seems to be no question at all that the Copper here symbolizes a human body."

Another detail seems to point in the same direction: some of the heavy chisel-like stone war daggers, commonly known as "slave-killers," which were supposedly used to dispatch slaves during wealth destruction rituals were also ritually used to cut Coppers ("Copper-breakers"). Breaking a skull and cutting a Copper appear to be equivalent at the conceptual level, an equivalence confirmed by two remarks, one by Goldman, the other by Boas.

> The breaking of a Copper is described by the Kwakiutl as a solemn ritual act that causes the Copper to be "killed" or made to "disappear". (Goldman, 1975:150)
>
> A broken Copper was spoken of by its owner as "lying dead in the water off the beach." (Boas, 1897:564).

It seems, therfore, that the Copper does indeed symbolize the human body. To sacrifice a Copper is metaphorically to sacrifice a slave. Since the arrival of the Europeans coincides with the disappearance of cannibalistic practices, and since we have no proof of the existence of Coppers before this period, the Copper might have been the one element that allowed the Kwakiutl to preserve an endangered ritual without changing its content and this simply by substituting a Copper for the missing but essential human body. If the Copper is considered as the most prestigious symbol of wealth, it might well be because it has, among others, the status of a living being, and more than that, the status of a human being. As Goldman has pointed out:

> *Qom naqa*, Rich Woman, (the wife of mythical ogre *Baxbakwalanuxsiwae*) defines what wealth means for Kwakiutl = . . . Wealth is life. (Goldman, 1975:11)
>
> Man Eater sings: "I am swallowing food alive; I eat living men. I swallow wealth. I swallow the wealth that my father is giving away." (Boas, 1897:459)

Conclusion

In their present shape, Coppers do not appear to have been made of native copper. They were all made of imported European copper. An analysis of the various concepts of "native" or "pure" copper shows how this quality, also translated as "real" or "true," is born of a necessary ritual opposition between the "real," ritually effective and part of the traditional world, and the "false," or coming from an outside world.

As an artistic representation Coppers are not a giant arrowhead, *Gonaqadet*'s forehead, or the metaphor of a mask, or are more than all these. A Copper is a metaphor of the human body, a "total" mask in Mauss' terms.

Coppers appear to have been born, at least in the Kwakiutl area, from an evolution closely parallel to the history of the potlatch. As the "rivalry" potlatches were replacing the intertribal wars, some of the goals of which were head hunting and captive taking, so Coppers were replacing the slaves who were prisoners of those wars. This last substitution, especially obvious in the analysis of the content of hamatsa rituals, is furthermore corroborated by the fact that the Kwakiutl admit to having acquired the hamatsa ritual at a later date, around 1835, from the Bella Bella.

Coppers express the abstract scheme of the human body by their shape (aesthetic message) and by their function and uses (semantic message). The Copper becomes, for example, a metaphor for the corpse, the food for the hamatsa cannibal initiate.

During the destruction phase of the potlatch, the "killing of a slave" and the "breaking of a Copper" are equivalent forms of sacrifice. As M. Mauss has pointed out:

> There are two motifs in destruction at potlatch: first the theme of war, the other is that of sacrifice. If property can be "killed" this means it must be "alive." (Mauss, 1974:102)

But since the "death" of a Copper is equivalent to the "death" (laxsa) of a hamatsa initiate, a resurrection is implied.

The Copper becomes a metaphor of energy, and energy in its highest form, that is human life. If the presence of a Copper is so real, it is because of its energy. This energy needs transitory material forms to assume its permanence whether Copper or its substitutes; Copper is a container or a catalyst of this energy held in each individual, each chief, each tribe.

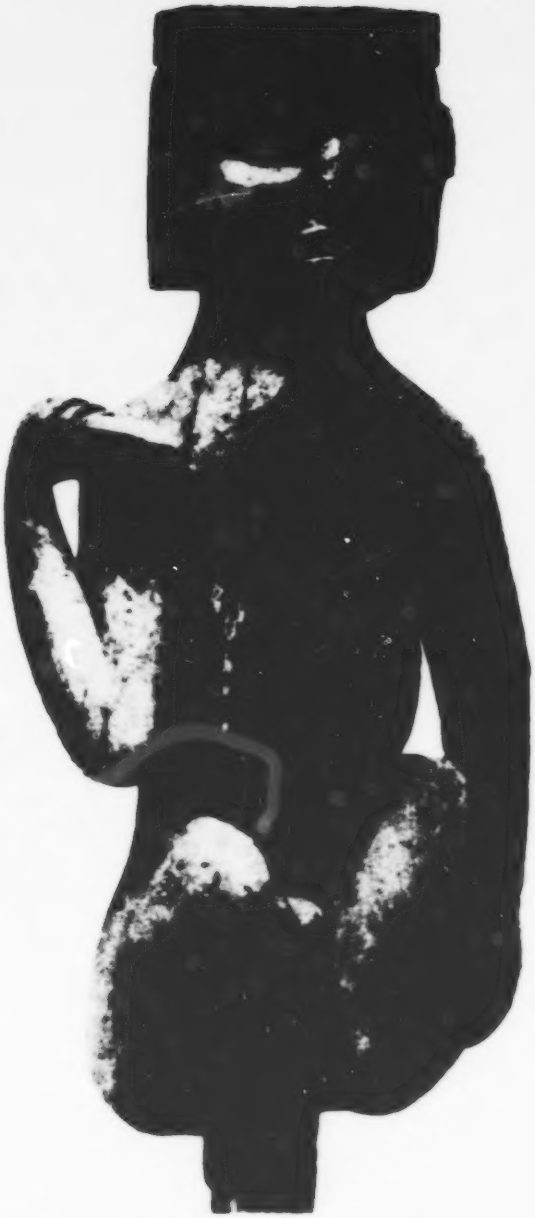


Figure 22. Figure in Museum fur Ethnographie, Berlin. Reproduced from Bastian, 1883, *The North-west Coast of America*, plate 6, fig. 1.

References

Boas, Franz

1897 "The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl," United States National Museum, Report for 1895: 311-738.

1910 *Kwakiutl Tales*. "Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, Vol. 2." Columbia University Press. New York.

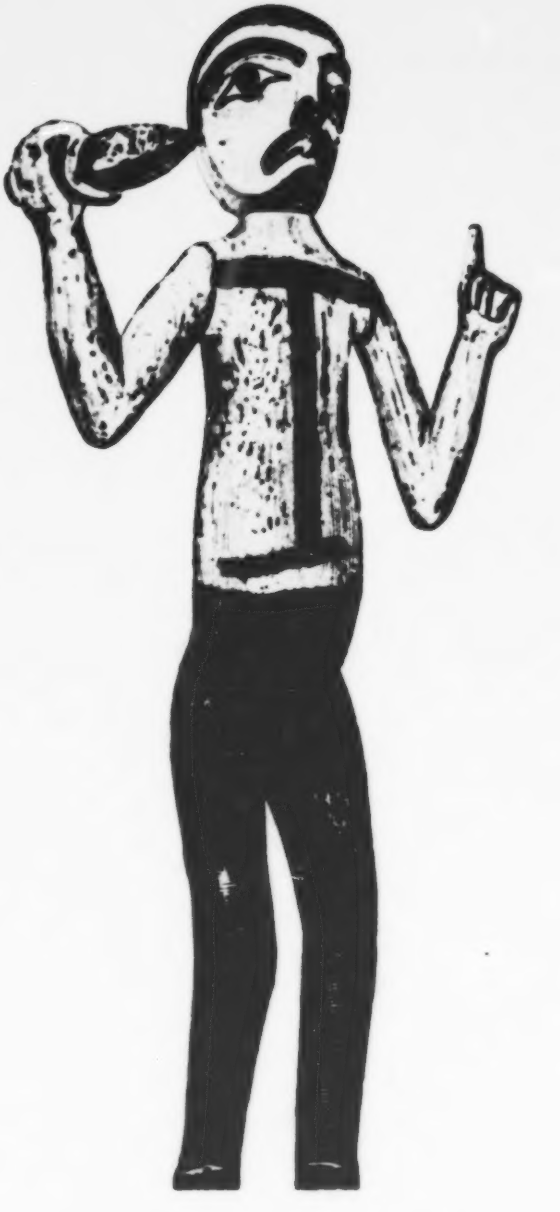


Figure 23. Figure in American Museum of Natural History 16/8393. Reproduced from Boas, 1909, *The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island*, plate XLVII, #3.

1955 *Primitive Art*. New York: Dover.

1966 *Kwakiutl Ethnography*. Helen Codere (ed.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Boas, F. and G. Hunt

1905 *Kwakiutl Texts*. "Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition." Vol. 3. Leiden.

Codere, Helen

1950 *Fighting with Property: A Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare 1792-1930*. Monographs of the American Ethnological Society. J. J. Augustin, New York.

Dawson, George

1880 "Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands, 1878." Montreal: Dawson Brothers (Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress, 1878-79).

Deans, James

1886 "On Copper Images of the Haidah Tribes." Proceedings of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, pp. 14-17.

Duff, Wilson

1961 *The Killer Whale Copper*. A Chief's Memorial to his Son, Victoria Provincial Museum Report, Victoria, pp. 32-36. (Reprinted in this volume, pp. 153-156)

Emmons, George T.

1941 Personal communications with William Paul.

1942 Personal communications with E. L. Keithahn in Keithahn: "Origin of the 'Chief's Copper' or 'Tinneh'," 1964.

Gatschet, Albert S.

1899 "Real," "True," or "Genuine," in Indian Languages. *American Anthropologist*. 1:155-161.

Goldman, Irving

1975 *The Mouth of Heaven. An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought*. John Wiley, New York.

Holm, Bill

1965 *Northwest Coast Indian Art*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

1975 ms. "Some More Conundrums in Northwest Coast Indian Art," paper presented at a symposium on Traditions and New Perspectives of Northwest Coast Art, University of California, Los Angeles.

Hunt, George

n.d. 1924? ms. "History of twenty Coppers from Alert Bay." Library of The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

Keithahn, E. L.

1964 "Origin of the 'Chief's Copper' or 'Tinneh'." Alaska Univ. Anthropological Papers, 12(2), Summer 1964 College, pp. 59-78.

Krause, Aurel

1956 *The Tlingit Indians*. Published for *American Ethnological Society*. Erna Gunther, trans. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

de Laguna, Frederica

1972 *Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the Tlingit.* Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

La Pérouse, Comte Jean François de

1798 *A Voyage Around the World, In the Years 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788.* J. Moir, Edinburgh.

Lisiansky, Urey

1814 *A Voyage Around the World, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806.* Printed for J. Booth, London.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1975 "La Voie des Masques" les Sentiers de la Creation, editions Alberta Skira, Genève. Vol. 1 et 2.

1977 "Les Dessous d'un Masque." L'Homme, janv-mars 1977, XVII (1), pp. 5-27.

Lord, John Keats

1866 *The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia.* 2 vols. London.

Mackenzie, Alexander

1891 "Descriptive Notes on Certain Implements, Weapons, etc., from Graham Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C." Proceedings and Transactions, 9, Ser. 2, pp. 45-59. Royal Society of Canada.

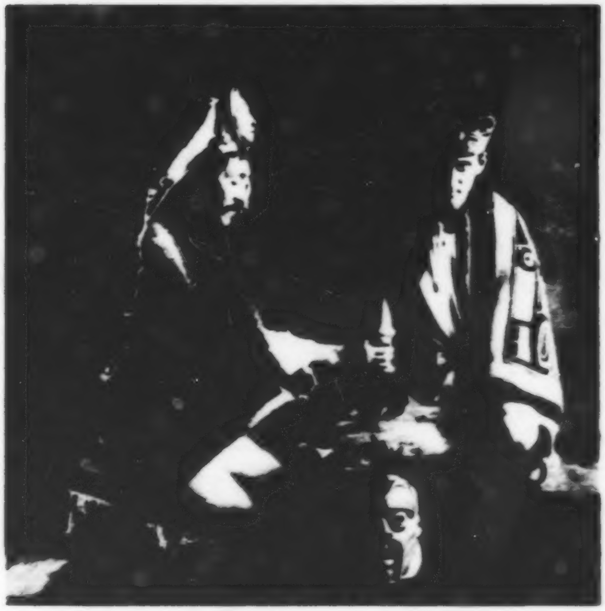


Figure 24. Kwakiutl Indians enacting ritual breaking of copper. (Field Museum photo)

Mauss, Marcel

1974 "The Gift." Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Meade, Edward

1971 *Indian Rock Carvings of the Pacific Northwest.* Gray, Sydney, B.C.

Meares, John

1790 *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789, from China to the North West Coast of America.* Legographic Press, London.

Mourelle, F. A.

1920 *Voyage of the Sonora* (1775). Thomas C. Russel, San Francisco.

Rickard, T. A.

1939 *The Use of Iron and Copper by the Indians of B.C.* The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. 3, pp. 25-50, Victoria.

Sacheck, William A.

1973 "Lower and Chitina Rivers: An History Resource Study." Office of Statewide Cultural Programs, Alaska Division of Parks. Department of Natural Resources, Consortium Library, Anchorage, Alaska.

Sturgis, William

(n.d.) My First Voyage: Experience on the ship Eliza from August 15, 1798 to February 19, 1799. (Journal of the ship Eliza.)

Swanton, John Reed

1909 "Tlingit Myths and Texts." Government Printing Office, Bulletin 33. Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington.

Waterman, T. T.

1923 "Some Conundrums in Northwest Coast Art." *American Anthropologist,* 25(4):pp. 435-451.

Wingert, P. S.

1949 *American Indian Sculpture: A Study of the Northwest Coast Art.* New York, J. J. Augustin.

Witthoft, J. and F. Eyman

1969 "Metalurgy of the Tlingit, Dene and Eskimo." *Expedition* (University Museum of the U. of Pennsylvania), Vol. 11(3): pp. 12-23. Philadelphia.

Will the Real Charles Edensaw Please Stand Up?: The Problem of Attribution in Northwest Coast Indian Art

Bill Holm

THOMAS BURKE MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON STATE MUSEUM

Does it really matter if an argillite chest was made by Charles Edensaw or Tom Price, or a mask or frontlet was carved by John Robson or Charlie James or Willie Seaweed? None of these artists will profit by the recognition. Just the same I believe there are good reasons why we might want to know and recognize the works of individual artists of the Northwest Coast, whether or not we know their names. For one thing, it's important just to recognize the fact of individual creativity in cultures other than our own. A few years ago I wrote an article about the art of the Kwakiutl master artist, Willie Seaweed (Holm, 1974). One reason for writing it was to make a point for recognition of the individuality of the "faceless" artists in tribal societies. I believe we slight the creativity of a group of people if we don't recognize the differences in the work of individuals within the group. In our own art tradition the "name's the thing." Names sell. An attribution, accurate or not, to a "name" artist like Willie Seaweed or Charles Edensaw will put extra dollars into a dealer's pocket.

But there's another good reason to spend the time and effort needed to be able to identify individual work. One of the few practical ways to pin down an art tradition to a particular place or time is to solidly identify one of the participants in that tradition. And besides this practical reason, I really would like to know—as well as it's possible to know—who did what. I'd like to be able to look at a fine mask or rattle or painted box and know where it came from. I'd like to be able to recognize the artist in the object, even though I may never be able to know his name. And I want to experience—even though that experience has to be vicarious and imperfect—the choices and decisions that artist made.

I believe it is possible to recognize what those choices were. The more thoroughly we understand the underlying structure of an art tradition the more clearly those choices stand out. Northwest Coast artists worked within regional art traditions which are gradually being more and more clearly defined. The northern two-dimensional aspect of the broad Northwest Coast tradition is so highly structured and logical that even slight individual variations can be recognized easily. But the fact that one piece differs from another isn't enough for attribution. Attribution is possible because artists make discrete choices in what they do or don't do. In northern Northwest Coast two-dimensional art the choices are primarily in the design elements which can be selected from the traditional available supply, the relationship of those elements to each other, and their physical form. The choices aren't limitless—certain elements and certain relationships must be used or the structure falls apart. Many of the choices made by Northwest Coast artists were, or rather are, intellectually made. Northern two-dimensional art is flourishing again and the best artists are developing individual styles within the system just as their predecessors did. They base their choices on the satisfaction they derive from the appearance of the forms and combinations.

Artists copy one another. If this weren't true there wouldn't be a recognizable art tradition in the world. By copying I mean that they choose what is personally satisfying in the work of other artists and incorporate it into their own work. At the same time they consciously or unconsciously alter these chosen elements and put their own stylistic stamp on their own work. When artists work closely together, especially as master and apprentice or as collaborators (both common on the Northwest Coast) their work is likely to be very similar (Holm, 1974:74, 78). So regional styles developed. We can easily tell the difference between Haida totem poles and poles of the Tlingit, Tsimshian or Kwakiutl. At the same time, typical poles of Massett are recognizably different from those of Prince of Wales Island, Skidegate, Tanu and Anthony Island—and those are different from each other. And within these village or regional schools the styles of individuals can be seen.

Unfortunately those who collected most of the art which we see today, from the earliest European and

Euro-American seafarers trading for curiosities to present day dealers, have had little or no interest in learning or recording the name of any artist (unless today he might be Charles Edensaw or Willie Seaweed), or even the location of his "shop." A few of the more systematic collectors of the turn of the century did occasionally record this kind of information, but even George Emmons, Charles Newcombe, Franz Boas and John Swanton were usually frustratingly silent about the artists. As far as I can find Adrian Jacobsen mentioned an artist's name only once in his notes and journals, and that in a quotation from another person from whom he had requested information about a Haida totem pole he had purchased (Jacobsen, 1977:26). But Jacobsen did record that he had commissioned the "most renowned wood-carver among the Bella Bella" (Jacobsen, 1977:10) to make the magnificent chief's seat for the Berlin Museum (Von Sydow, 1923). We have to thank him for giving us this very convenient peg on which to hang our theories about a Bella Bella style in 1881. Little scraps of information like this shine out like diamonds in the gravel.

Another of these sparklers is a single note in the catalogue of the Northwest Coast collections of the American Museum of Natural History. Dr. I. R. Powell collected a group of masks and sculptured figures of shamans in 1882 and described them as being unlike the masks used by the Haida themselves, and made for sale by an artist of Massett named Quaa-telth. They are part of a large group of very similar masks and figures scattered among collections in North America and Europe. They are portrait-like masks, many of them with moveable features (fig. 1), wooden figures of shamans (fig. 2), a few dance headdress frontlets bearing "portraits" of young Haida women (fig. 3) and several distinctive rattles combining a bear's head with a human figure. In extreme contrast to the elegant Haida princesses there are also extant a two-headed man, a dignified Sphinx (fig. 4)[1] and at least four naturalistic representations of the shrunken corpse of a Haida shaman (fig. 5).

Marius Barbeau mentioned the carver Charles Gwaytihl in his *Haida Carvers in Argillite* (Barbeau, 1957:178-79). The few biographical details he recorded agree in the main with the recollection of Mrs. Florence Davidson of Massett who knew the carver as a very old man before his death sometime prior to 1920. She called him q̇ʷaitił, which she translated "Wets the Island." She said, as had Barbeau, that he carved masks and figures of wood, and

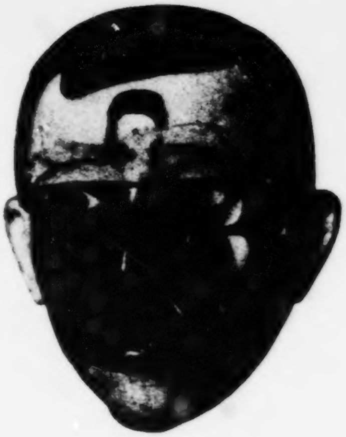


Figure 1. Mask attributed to Gwaytihl
(British Columbia Provincial Museum, BCPM 10664)

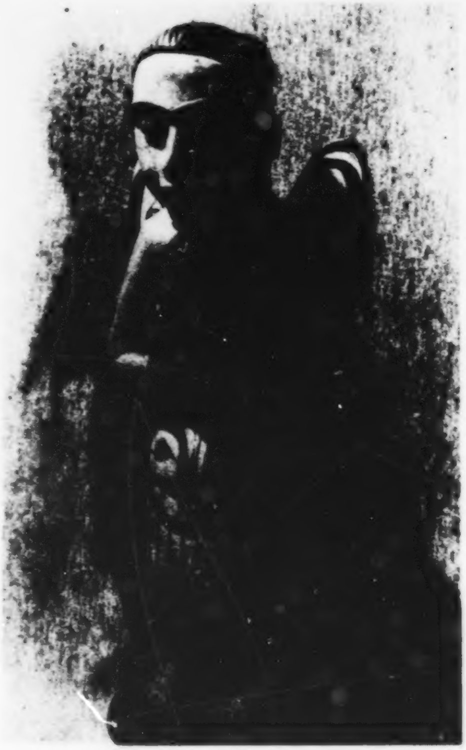


Figure 2. Shaman figure attributed to Gwaytihl
(American Museum of Natural History, 16/396)

---

[1] Since writing this paper I have received catalogue information from the British Museum which describes the Sphinx as having been "carved by Simeon Stilthda, a Haida, from a picture in an illustrated Bible shown him by the Rev. Mr. Collinson between 1874-1878." If this information is accurate some of the other pieces attributed to Gwaytihl may actually be by another associated carver.

Figure 3. Frontlet attributed to Gwaytihl
(Oakland Museum, White Loan 97)

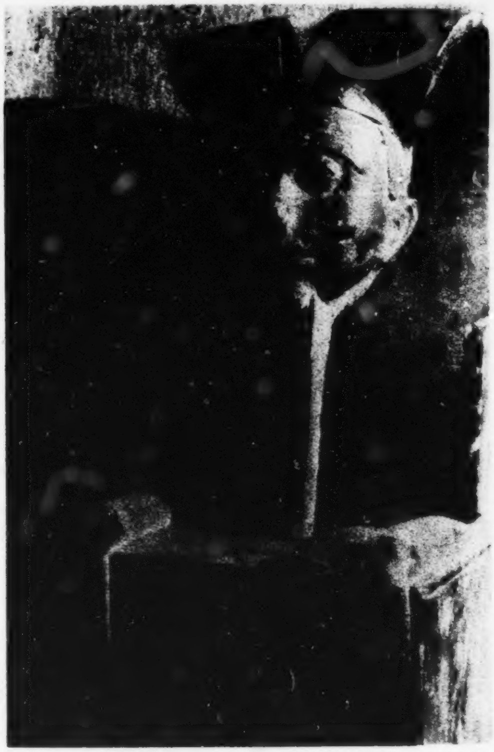


Figure 4. Sphinx figure attributed to Gwaytihl
(British Museum, 96.1202)

didn't carve argillite. The British Columbia Provincial Museum has a remarkable collection of eight Gwaytihl masks, most of which were shown in the Vancouver Art Gallery's 1967 exhibition *Arts of the Raven*. At that time there was some speculation (based in part on the early 1880s Massett provenience) that they were the work of Charles Edensaw. One of Wilson Duff's responsibilities in the planning of that exhibition was an Edensaw gallery. Wilson had really just begun his intense interest in Edensaw, and he tentatively identified a large number of pieces as Edensaw's work. Wilson, Bill Reid and I did not agree on all these attributions at the time, but our understanding of the characteristics of Edensaw's work was very rudimentary, and most of the choices were left to stand. Wisely, it seems now, Wilson didn't make an Edensaw attribution on the Gwaytihl masks, but the notion still lingers on. One of his masks was recently purchased by a museum for a very high price which was based in part on an Edensaw identification.

It's certain that we'll never know the names of most of the Indian artists whose work survives in collections. Still I think there is good reason to try to identify as many pieces as possible with known individuals. The Gwaytihl example, is a good one. Because we *know* a few solidly documented pieces by this artist we are aware that we're dealing with another man's work, and we can avoid lumping him with other known artists like Charlie Edensaw. We can see that the individual characteristics of his work are significant and not just variants within a single artist's style.

Of course it's impossible to assign a maker to every piece, or even to identify every piece of a known artist's work. Artists' styles change over the years. Edensaw, for example, was born about 1839 and died in 1920, a life of about 80 years. That means that his productive life was probably over half a century. During those years he lived and worked at Massett, Skidegate, Port Simpson, Kasaan and probably other places where no doubt he picked up ideas from other artists and their work. Even so I believe we can start from a single example, or several stylistically alike examples, and project that artist's style back and forward over his career and attribute work to his hand. Because northern Northwest Coast two-dimensional art is so highly structured it's entirely possible for one who has a good understanding of that structure to recognize very subtle variations on the standard, and these variations define artists' styles. It's very interesting to me to see how individualistic these styles came to be, and how closely each artist adhered to his own way of doing things over considerable stretches of time.

Some styles are very distinctive. Others are less easily separated and seem to be the styles of artists who were strongly influenced by one another. There were probably whole regional styles which we misread as the works of single artists. A good example of this is the large number of painted objects, particularly boxes and chests, which were made at Bella Bella over an apparently long period of time in the last century and the early years of this century. These all share really distinctive characteristics which make them stand out from similar objects from other places. We do know the names of a few of the latter day practitioners of this school so there's now no doubt that we are dealing with several artists. So far I'm satisfied to call these pieces "Bella Bella." The settee that Captain Jacobsen commissioned in 1881 is a fine example of this style.

Boxes with these very specific formal characteristics have been collected all over the coast, but I'm sure they were made at Bella Bella. The details of the style are quite easy to recognize. Some of the basic characteristics are very thin formlines in a wide open composition, extremely nonconcentric, *small* inner ovoids and single hatching (that is, hatching in one direction only, usually from upper right to lower left) in the secondary U forms (figs. 6, 7). There are many other, but more subtle, points of distinction, but this list should suffice to show that this can be seen as a distinct style of painting.

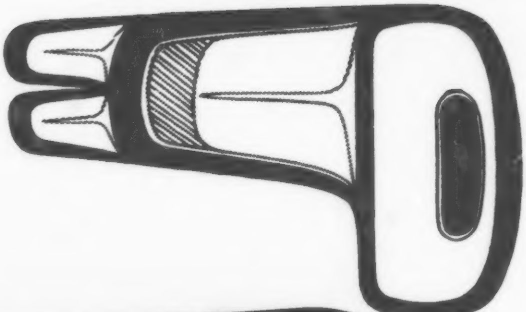
In contrast to the open, light, feeling of the Bella Bella examples are many pieces, some of them very old, which are characterized by massive semi-angular formlines with very constricted background space and narrow tertiary areas (figs. 8, 9). Between these extremes are numberless individual styles. I doubt if complete sense can ever be made of this mountain of material, but it is worth working at.

Significant Characteristics

What are the significant characteristics which stamp the work of an artist on the Northwest Coast? Just as the paintings of European artists of the past can be identified by scholarly experts through stylistic clues, the masterpieces of the coast can be separated on the basis of objectively described characteristics. But these characteristics must be significant. That is they must represent choices which each artist makes that are unlike those made by others. There are certain aspects of Northwest Coast art which are of little use in attribution. Subject matter is one of these. Since the artists who produced most of the great pieces were professionals in a very real sense—formally trained, working on commission for others (and paid for their work), and *typically* producing for chiefs of the opposite phratry—there is very little use

Figure 5. Dead shaman figure attributed to Gwaytihl (Princeton University Museum, 5160)

Figure 6. Box, Bella Bella (Burke Museum, 1-10803)



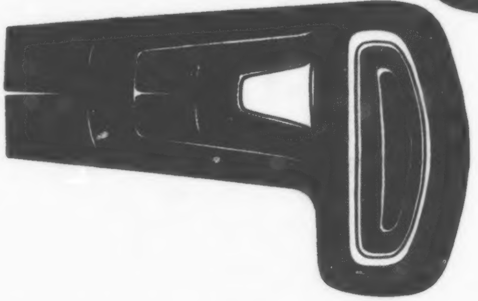


Figure 7. Formline wing design: Bella Bella

Figure 8. Formline wing design: old northern style

Figure 9. Tlingit chest
(de Menil collection)

in attributing on the basis of crest ownership. On the other hand the same artists, carving argillite and wooden poles for sale to non-Indians, frequently used their own crests and stories as subjects. It is unsafe to rely on subject matter alone as a means of identifying artists.

Attribution based on the type of object is almost completely futile. An extreme of this futility in object-based attribution is Marius Barbeau's identification of all argillite and wooden whistles and flutes as the work of George Gunya (Barbeau, 1957:4-9). Gunya may well have made flutes of argillite, but those so attributed by Barbeau run the full range of Haida styles and culminate in a pair of clearly Kwakiutl winter dance whistles, of which he writes "Although they are said to have been found at Blunden Harbour in the Kwakiutl country to the south, they undoubtedly are Haida pieces from the hand of George Gunya" (Barbeau, 1957:9). These two whistles were purchased by C. F. Newcombe from Willie Seaweed at Blunden Harbour in 1914 and are typically Kwakiutl in every way. Marius Barbeau was very active in assigning work to the hands of individual artists. Initially it appears that he made these assignments on the basis of information given him by the native owners of the objects or by people who knew the artists' work directly, or could cite traditions of the origin of the pieces. This is the best seen in his work on the art of the upper Skeena River, *Totem Poles of the Gitksan* (Barbeau, 1929). Later, and most prominently in his book *Haida Carvers in Argillite* (Barbeau, 1957), he went far beyond his earlier method in identifying the work of Haida artists. Sadly for the state of understanding of areal and individual styles in Northwest Coast Indian art, and Haida art in particular, Marius Barbeau's conclusions were really meaningless, based on irrelevant data. The results have been confusion and misunderstanding.

Six Haida Artists

I've decided to take a group of six Haida artists whose work is well represented in collections and try to describe what makes their styles distinctive and recognizable. These artists were contemporaries, born in the mid-nineteenth century and living into the twentieth. They certainly all knew each other. They each lived at some time either at Massett or Skidegate or both. All produced for sale both to their own people and to outsiders. Four of the six are known by name—Charles Edensaw, John Robson, Gwaytihl and John Cross. One of the other two is probably Tom Price.

I have already mentioned the work of Gwaytihl and that most of his known production consists of masks and carved figures made for sale to collectors. These are all naturalistic, with only the stylization of the eyes and eyebrows and the dress and decoration of the people he portrayed to show clearly that they come from the Northwest Coast. Yet even though they are portrait-like, Gwaytihl's stamp is on all of them.

Naturalistic portrait-like masks and figures were not a novel idea for Haida carvers when Gwaytihl began to make them, but most of his known (or recognizable) work consists of such objects. Judging from his evident skill and experience he must have been carving for a long time before the early 1880s when almost all the documented examples of his carving were collected. It may yet be possible to extend his productive career back in time by recognizing his hand in earlier pieces.

His post-1880 "portraits" share many distinct characteristics. Fortunately for attribution, Gwaytihl, although more cognizant of human anatomy than his contemporaries, developed conventions of representation which he repeated in almost all his carvings. His subjects have small eyes, by Haida carving standards, on a moderate orb (fig. 10). The eyelids are open, with little or no constriction, and they have a narrow black rim. The inner ovoid is round. The space between the long, narrow and slightly arched brows and the eye is wide and shallowly recessed. The orbs continue well below the eyes before giving way to full round cheeks. These cheeks have a naturalistic relationship to the corners of the mouth, which are slightly recessed. The lips are narrow and rounded, tending to be less ribbon-like and more naturalistic than is usual for Haida sculpture. The nose is very narrow and rather long, with small unflared nostrils. Full cheeks merge smoothly with a prominent, rounded chin. Rounded and somewhat prominent chins like these are also seen on some very early, and probably Haida, portrait-like masks.

One of the most individualistic conventions of Gwaytihl's sculpture is the form of the ears. They are rendered naturalistically but invariably stand well out and taper at the bottom to a small lobe. This form is unique to Gwaytihl's work. I have never seen ears like these on any other Northwest Coast carvings.

Gwaytihl regularly rendered the hair on his masks and carvings in a naturalistic manner, modelling well-defined locks and curls and texturing the surface with fine parallel grooves (figs. 1, 3, 11). At least one mask has attached hair and many are fitted with fur moustaches and beards. A few have moveable eyebrows of furred skin (fig. 1). Gwaytihl also frequently added nose rings, ear pendants and small lip pins to his wooden faces and he sometimes mechanized his masks to move eyes, lower

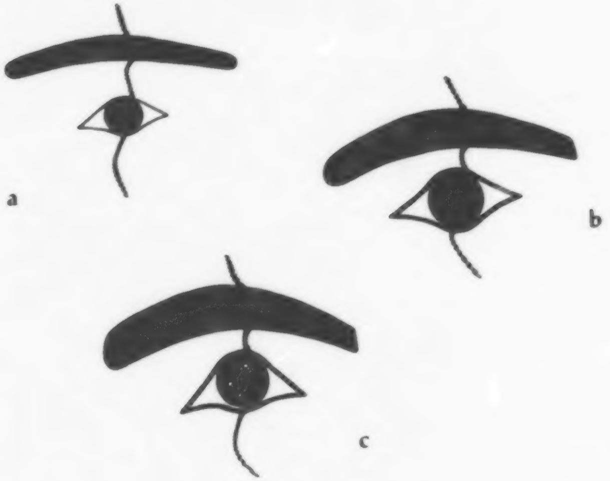


Figure 10. Typical eye structure for three Haida artists:
a. Gwaytihl
b. Edensaw
c. Robson

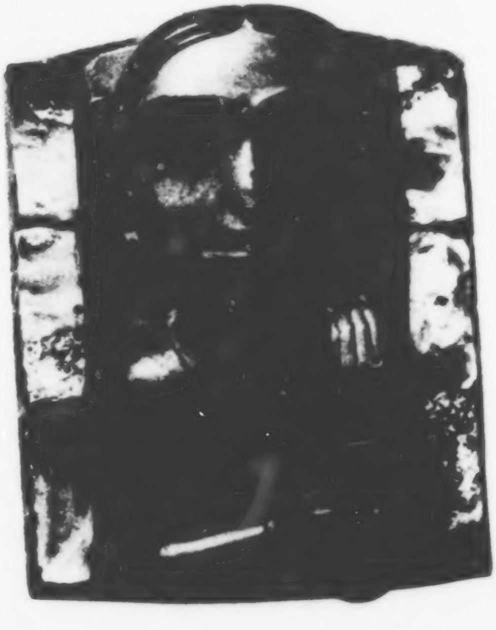


Figure 11. Frontlet attributed to Gwaytihl (Smithsonian Institution, 221176)

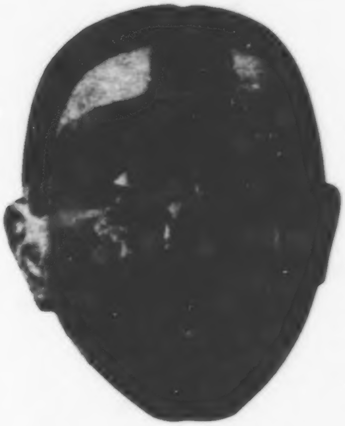


Figure 12. Mask attributed to Gwaytihl (BCPM, 10666)

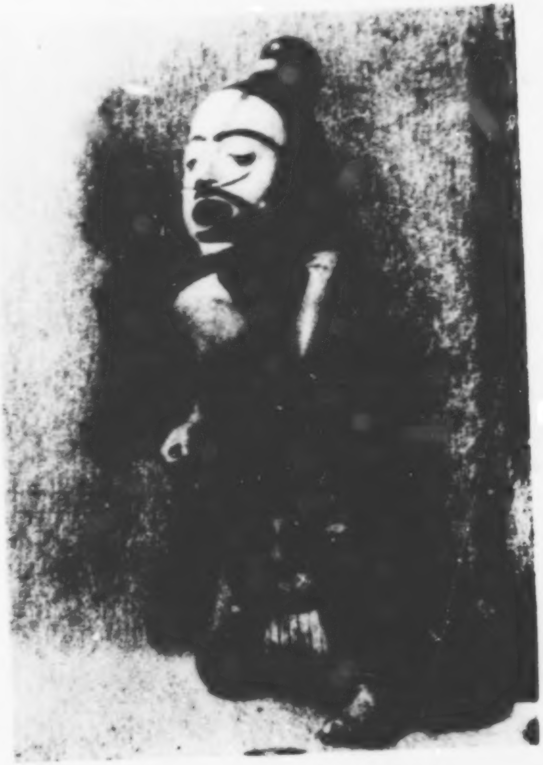


Figure 13. Shaman figure attributed to Gwaytihl (American Museum of Natural History, 16/397)

eyelids, raise brows and open lips (figs. 1, 12). With all this he retained his conventionalized proportion and form of the facial features. Gwaytihl's portrait masks are small, barely large enough to fit on a face. Those with mechanized features, particularly eyes, are cluttered in the inside with strings and moving parts which makes them difficult or impractical to wear. This is consistent with the statements that the masks were made for sale to foreigners and not for Haida use.

Unlike most Haida sculptured figures, even those of argillite, Gwaytihl's wooden shamans frequently strike animated poses (fig. 13). Anatomy is carefully observed. This is most apparent in the dead shaman series, in which the skeletal structure is carefully rendered. Sunken features and desiccated skin stretched over the skull are skillfuly depicted (fig. 5).

It may have been the character of the two-dimensional painting on the shamans' aprons which originally suggested an Edensaw connection—open medium weight formlines, rather rounded, with frequent use of true line bordering ground areas. But careful comparison shows many differences from Edensaw's work. Gwaytihl's choices of elements and relationships are more conservative and his ovoids and Us are more angular than Edensaw's, at least for the post-1880 period (figs. 2, 12).

Charles Edensaw

When Wilson Duff, Bill Reid and I were busy selecting the objects to be shown in the *Arts of the Raven* exhibition, our conversations frequently revolved around the subject of attribution. We wanted to feature an individual master artist in one of the galleries, and the natural and unanimous choice was Charles Edensaw. Wilson took primary responsibility for that part of the exhibit and set about the very difficult task of identifying the work to be shown. It seemed to me at the time that we were basing many of our notions about attribution, both general—on a tribal level—and specific, in regard to individual artist's work, on very subjective ideas. I believed then, as I still do, that styles can be analyzed by isolating specific characteristics which can be described in objective terms. What we call "feelings" about identification of art objects are based on our subconscious analysis of just such solid characteristics. We should be able to delve beneath those "gut reactions" and isolate consciously the myriad data which our brains have been fed. It seemed to me that Edensaw's flat, formline decoration was distinctive and recognizable, and since such a high percentage of northern art included at least some two-dimensional surface detail it would be worth while to try this kind of isolation of

Edensaw's characteristics. I attempted this in a three page (and very tentative) outline titled *What Makes an "Edensaw"? (2-D Version)*. Looking back on that beginning attempt after ten years of intermittent searching for the means to identify Edensaw's and other's work, I find that there is really nothing I would change now, and very little new to add. Yet during those years, apparently ignoring the lack of these identifying signs, I took some pieces to be Edensaw's which I now firmly believe, bolstered by identification of other artists' styles, not to be his.

Charles Edensaw's two-dimensional design from at least the last two decades of the nineteenth century until the end of his productive career sometime early in the twentieth century exemplifies the work of a highly competent, imaginative artist with absolute mastery of the tradition in which he worked, and who had developed a very personal version of that tradition. That that version was fully formed by 1880 is shown by a bracelet (fig. 14b) in the National Museum of Man which would be very difficult to separate from Edensaw's work of thirty years after its collection date of 1879. Careful direct comparison does show significant, if subtle, differences which seem to be part of a continuous progression of the change in his style. Interestingly another bracelet (fig. 14a) collected at the same time illustrates an even earlier version of Edensaw's style.

The formline art of Charles Edensaw, at least in this later period, is unique and easily distinguished from all other work except that of copyists or certain artists who were heavily influenced by him. There is a chance that some of these Edensaw-like works are actually from his hand, although most of them have details which are unlikely to have been part of his repertoire of choices. The first impression one has of an Edensaw flat design, be it in engraved silver or argillite, or in painting on wood or basketry, is of an open, freely flowing grid of medium to narrow width formlines, very rounded in the Us and ovoids (fig. 14c). Many late works have ovoids and Us whose ends are arcs of circles. Formline width varies as is usual in northern flat art, but the variations are moderate —the upper rims of ovoids for example are little wider than the lower edges, which also tend to be straight or even slightly convex. Ovoids which are concave on the lower edge are rare in Edensaw's work after 1880. Completely circular ovoids are seen (figs. 15, 16, 17, 18, 59), and very short, rounded ovoids with flattened bases are common. Consistent with these features is the lack of strong non-concentricity in ovoid complexes. That is, inner ovoids in eyes and joints tend to be nearly centred in the tertiary space within the surrounding formline ovoid. Any non-concentricity is usually very subtle if present at all. If the inner ovoid is surrounded by

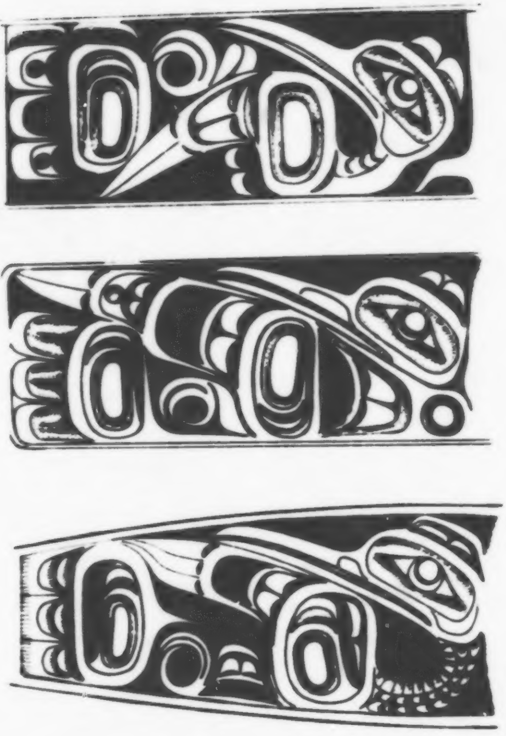


Figure 14. Bracelets attributed to Edensaw
(a. National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 103b;
b. National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 103a;
c. Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, A 8093)

Figure 15. Spruce root plaque attributed to Edensaw
(American Museum of Natural History, 16.1/1195)

Figure 16. Detail of argillite platter attributed to Edensaw (National Museum of Ireland, 704.1894)

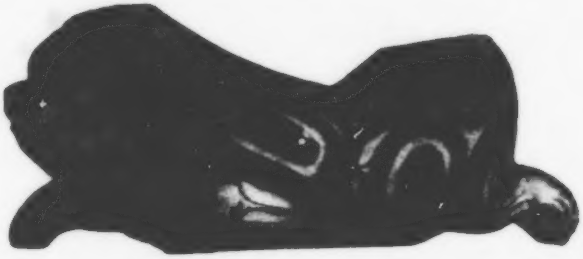


Figure 17. Frog bowl attributed to Edensaw (Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, A7054)

Figure 18. Spruce root hat painting attributed to Edensaw (Hauberg collection)

an eyelid line, the ovoid is very short or even circular, and the eyelid line forms long, open points extending nearly to the outer edge of the eyesocket space (fig. 17). The eyelid points are only slightly below the centre of the inner ovoid. Inner ovoids of this type are frequently elaborated with the typical C shaped relief, tangent to the top of, and similar in form to the relieved ovoid. Edensaw also favoured the complete ovoid relief in inner ovoids, usually non-concentric (fig. 18).

Tertiary spaces are also handled in characteristic ways. In relief carved pieces, especially in silver or argillite, the sockets of the long eyelid form of eye are smoothly hollowed, leaving a narrow flat rim at the eyelid line (fig. 16, 19). The same technique was followed in the larger eye and joint sockets without pointed eyelids. Very narrow sockets were sometimes bevel cut, sloping down to the inner edge. Frequently in silver engraving, where the scale is very small, and probably in the interest of keeping the design open and uncluttered, Edensaw eliminated the recessing of the socket altogether, and many large joints have only a single, or occasionally a double engraved line separating the inner ovoid from its surrounding formline (fig. 14). Typically these inner ovoids are of the "salmon trout's head" type. An interesting and unusual feature of some of them, for example in the two 1879 bracelets, is the elimination of the formline which would ordinarily form the lower jaw of the figure, leaving the mouth area to form a partial tertiary "socket" (figs. 14a, b). These forms of rendering the juncture of inner and formline ovoid are among several nearly exclusive Edensaw design characteristics which taken together may objectively identify his work.

Another favourite design unit was an inner ovoid much like a simple "salmon trout's head" without a lower jaw. Although not unknown in other artist's work it was more frequently used by Charles Edensaw than by any other (figs. 20, 21). Another form which seems almost exclusively his is a variant on the stylized face, used as a joint, in which the eyebrow and upper eyelid line are eliminated and the lower eyelid line sweeps down and around the large, round eye (figs. 22a, 23, 24). If Edensaw was not entirely alone in his use of this concept, he was its most frequent user and probably its inventor. In his work its form distinguishes it from those from other hands.

Primary and secondary Us and the tertiary spaces they define are perfectly consistent in form with Edensaw's characteristic ovoids. They are smoothly rounded, moderately swelling and of medium weight. Legs of secondary Us are very narrow. In engraving, the crosshatched tertiary areas are almost always bordered with a double engraved line (figs. 14, 19, 21, 23, 24). Edensaw frequently applied this detail to areas which would normally be considered as ground. Whether or not he conceived them as ground areas or transposed them by his tertiary line into tertiary units cannot be known. Since he freely alternated between fine crosshatching and hollowing of true tertiary areas, we can get no clue from these techniques. In any case the double line outline of crosshatched space is an Edensaw trademark. When these tertiary (or ground) areas are elaborated with a split, as they frequently are in his work, the split is open and its sides smoothly curved—almost, but not quite, arcs of circles. The open space in the split is engraved, usually with single-hatched lines.

Sometime before 1879 Charles Edensaw began to incorporate variations on a distinctive design complex in his engraving on silver and argillite, and more rarely in painting and wood carvings. In my 1967 paper I called this design "stacked Us" (fig. 25). More than any other detail the stacked U complex identifies Edensaw's late work. A very narrow secondary formline U divides the space enclosed in a primary U almost across the centre. Enclosed in this secondary U is either a pair of solid Us with typically rounded ends, or a tertiary split U, crosshatched or hollowed. The remaining space, beyond the dividing secondary U, is elaborated similarly, but with the opposite design. In a few examples the design opposite the pair of Us is a solid crosshatched U, bordered with a tertiary line, rather than a split U. Almost every known Edensaw engraving in silver or argillite incorporates at least one pair of examples of the stacked U complex, and a great many have several. Even the tiny argillite poles from the Cunningham collection abound with them in spite of their diminutive scale. Barbeau illustrated these poles, which he attributed to Isaac Chapman, in his *Haida Carvers in Argillite*. Of the 36 poles shown there, 16 (figs. 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, 194, 197, 198, 199, 203, 208r, 209, 210, 211, 213 and 214) are actually by Charles Edensaw (Barbeau, 1957:178-99).

Although the stacked U detail as employed by Edensaw is uniquely his, it was developed by him from a fairly common U complex found in northern formline designs from at least the earliest historical period. This was a secondary complex of a pair of formline or solid Us based on another formline or solid U, the whole enclosed in a primary formline U (fig. 9). It is Edensaw's consistent use of the design, his modification of the proportions of the parts, his innovative transposition of the upper and lower details and his distinctive formline style which make the complex so nearly a signature. In contrast, he rarely used one of the otherwise most common U complexes—the tertiary U enclosing a pair of secondary Us (fig. 26). His choice for a simple U complex, especially in painting, was the very standard primary U enclosing a thin legged

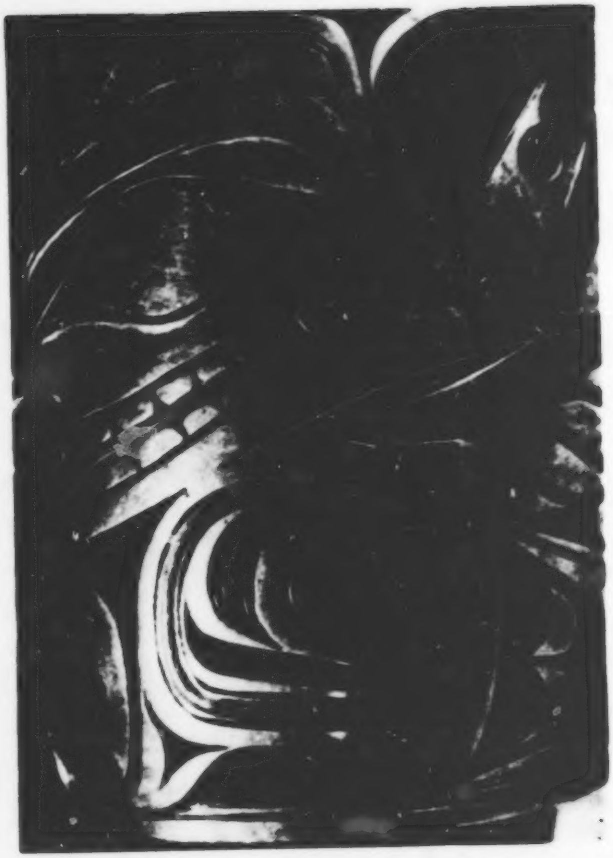
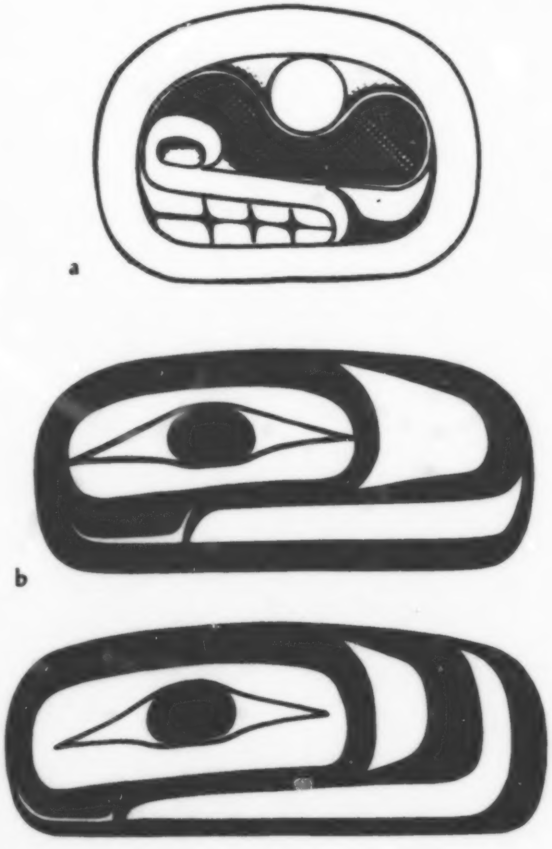


Figure 19. Detail of silver bracelet attributed to Edensaw (McMichael Canadian Collection)

Figure 20. Spruce root hat painting attributed to Edensaw (Denver Art Museum, Y HI 28)

Figure 21. Argillite chest panel attributed to Edensaw (Smithsonian Institution, 274593)



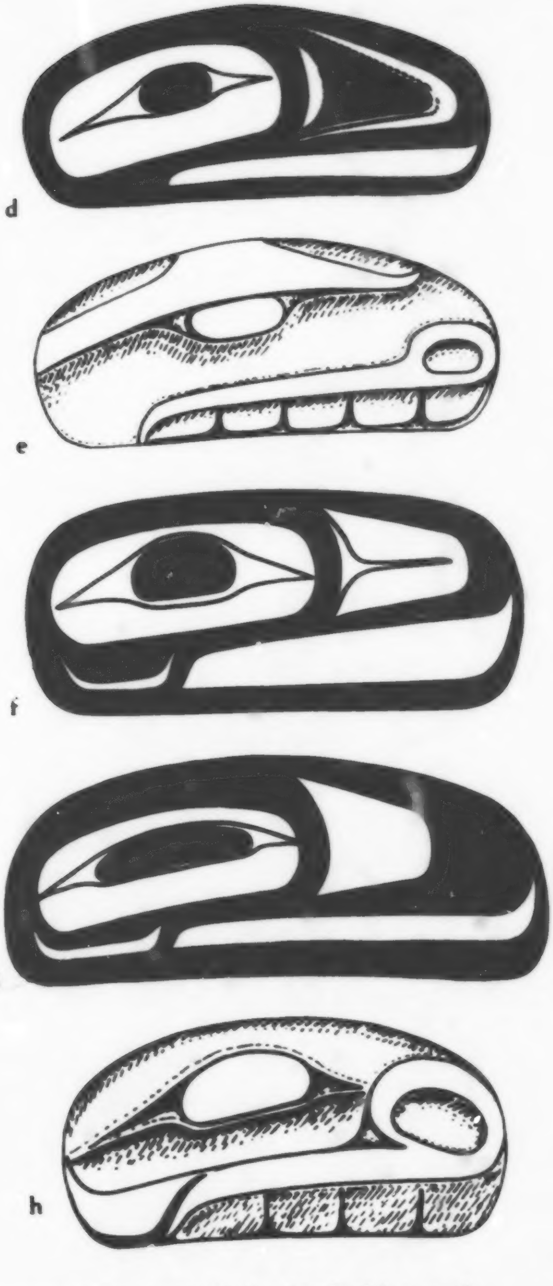


Figure 22. Salmon-trout's head and stylized face ovoids:
a. Edensaw; b. Edensaw; c. Robson; d. Cross; e. Cross;
f. Price; g. Chicago settee maker; h. Chicago settee maker

Figure 23. Argillite platter attributed to Edensaw (National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 824)

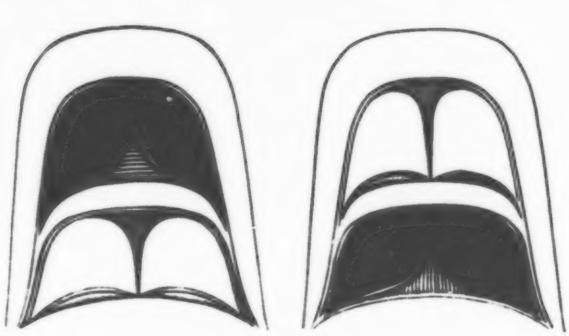


Figure 25. Stacked U complexes, after Edensaw

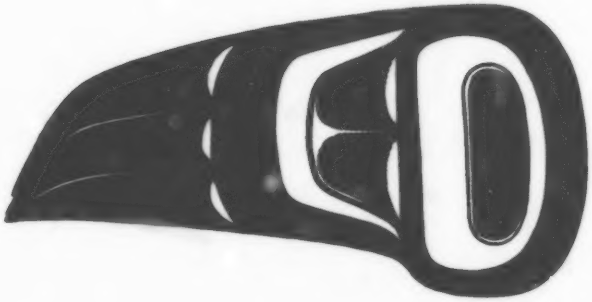


Figure 26. Formline wing design, after Robson

Figure 24. Argillite platter attributed to Edensaw (Lowie Museum of Anthropology, 2-15590)

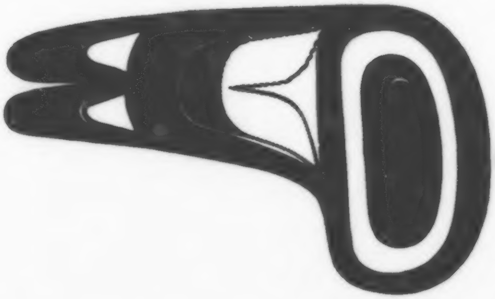


Figure 27. Formline wing design, after Edensaw

Figure 28. Argillite pole attributed to Edensaw (Johnson Collection)

30.

Figure 29. Detail of model pole attributed to Edensaw (American Museum of Natural History 16/8768)

Figure 30. Frontlet attributed to Edensaw (Stafford Collection)

secondary formline U, which in turn encloses a tertiary split U (fig. 27). A decorative detail which Barbeau correctly mentioned as being characteristically Edensaw is the border of "godroons" and ropelike carving on argillite platters and chest lids (figs. 16, 23, 24). They were not exclusively his, but he used them with great frequency.

There are extant a number of bracelets of very light gauge silver which are shallowly engraved with relatively simple designs incorporating many of the features mentioned above. They usually exhibit single hatching rather than crosshatching in the ground and tertiary areas and if any sockets are hollowed it is only those of the figure's eyes, and then very shallowly. If these bracelets have truly characteristic Edensaw formlines and design complexes I am inclined to regard them as his work. Some of these bracelet designs were copied by other artists, but the work is usually so inferior and the elements so distorted that they should not be confused with original Edensaw pieces.

The older of the two 1879 bracelets exhibits features which suggest the form of Edensaw's earlier style (fig. 14a). Less smoothly flowing formlines result from more angular ovoids and somewhat awkward junctures. Ground and tertiary forms (which result from the relationship of adjacent primary formlines) are less integrated with the whole composition than in later work. A number of argillite carvings—the Bear's Mouth house models in the Vancouver Centennial Museum (AA 54, 55, 56, 57) and the Alaska State Museum are examples—illustrate this earlier and somewhat less elegant structure while already incorporating Edensaw traits such as the double outlines of tertiary and ground spaces and rudimentary stacked Us. More massive and angular formlines with greater width variation, and more frequent use of the tertiary U-double secondary U complex characterize these early pieces.

A spectacular transitional piece is the carved and painted settee (BCPM 1296) which Newcombe collected from Edensaw in 1901 but which must have been made several decades before. Conceptually the huge frog is like much later designs (fig. 20) even to the primary colour shift from black to red in the mouth, but the angularity is pre-1879 at latest. Stacked Us, mouthless and circular "salmon trout's head" ovoids and other typically Edensaw features appear in the design.

Interestingly, 18 painted spruce root hats which I have seen and firmly believe to have been painted by Charles Edensaw share a top painting of a four-pointed star with each point divided alternately red and black (figs. 18, 20). Are these top paintings the artist's signature? I'm more and more inclined to believe it. Several other hats which seem to be Edensaw's work, but which differ in composition from those 18 have an all red four-pointed star design (Holm, 1965, fig. 7). They may be by another painter yet unidentified, or perhaps represent earlier Edensaw work.

Edensaw's Sculpture

The most solidly documented sculptural pieces by Charles Edensaw are the model totem poles and the house model commissioned by John Swanton for the American Museum of Natural History and illustrated, along with a similar group of models by the Skidegate carver, John Robson, in his *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (Swanton, 1909:Pl. 1-8). The pictures were later published by Marius Barbeau in *Haida Carvers in Argillite* and all attributed to Edensaw. That the two styles are superficially similar is certainly true, but analysis of their details makes it quite possible to identify each artist's work. Edensaw's sculpture, at least as represented in small poles, frontlets and argillite and ivory carvings, exhibits features which are just as distinctive as in his flat work. In addition all the poles and models have two-dimensional detail in wings, fins and ears which can corroborate the attribution.

As in the flat designs there is an overall feeling of movement, openness and integration of positive forms and background. The same principles which govern the organization of his formline designs operate in the carved pieces. Parts tend to be smoothly rounded. The limbs of the various creatures are rounded in cross section. Because they are smoothly modelled and compact they have a chubby effect. They are bent at the elbows and knees, and the fingers and claws (often three in number) grasp purposefully, a detail which helps in no small measure to relate the interlocked figures to one another.

It is in the eye and eyesocket area of the Northwest Coast sculpture that tribal and individual identities can be most quickly differentiated. Edensaw chose and consistently used a unique eye form which superficially resembles that used by other artists but which has recognizable differences from them (figs. 10, 28, 29, 30). The eye itself is on a well-rounded orb, and features a round iris enclosed in open, tapered lids with a well-defined rim. As in the flat designs the points of the lids are not dropped much below the centre of the eye. Above the upper lid the socket is fairly wide and shallowly recessed, retaining the feeling of the underlying orb. The most distinctive feature, however, is the treatment of the area under the eye. Here, the upper cheek plane intersects the eye orb immediately below the lower eyelid line.

Figure 31. Detail of argillite platter attributed to Edensaw (Lowie Museum of Anthropology, 2-15590)

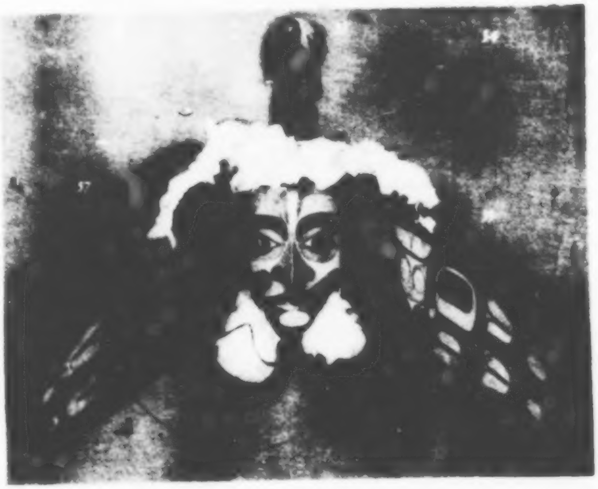


Figure 32. Mask attributed to Edensaw (Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University: photo courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum)

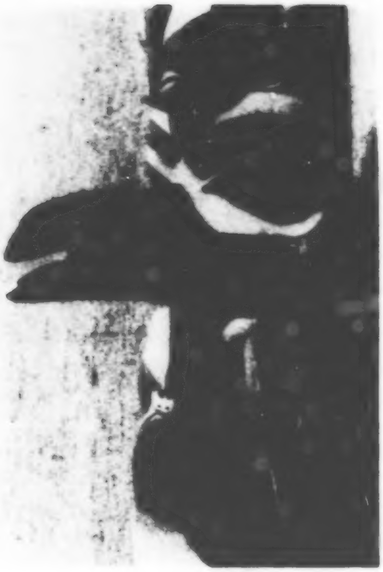


Figure 33. Detail of model pole attributed to Edensaw (American Museum of Natural History, 16/8769)

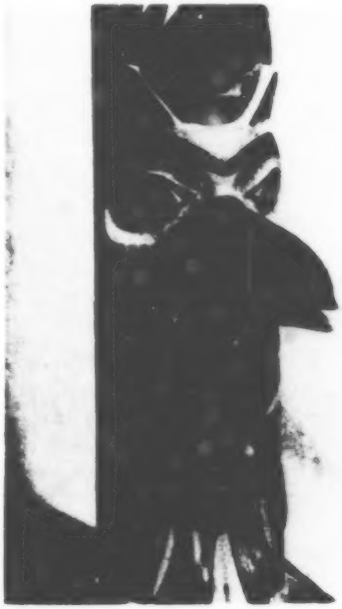


Figure 34. Detail of model pole attributed to Robson (Lowie Museum of Anthropology, 2-14267)

There is usually no hollowing of the socket below the eye, except the recessed definition of the eyelid line. In human faces and in more naturalistically rendered animal faces there is no defined ovoid eyesocket. This common feature of Haida sculpture is eliminated in favour of rounded cheek planes. Even where the more stylized eye socket is used, the orb-upper cheek plane intersection remains an identifying feature (fig. 33).

The eyebrows are smoothly curved, wider near the centre and tapering to usually rounded ends. The lips are often slightly rounded and tapered toward the corners of the mouth. Naturalistic human faces have correspondingly natural modelling of the lips (fig. 31). Human and animal nostrils are defined and rounded. Teeth tend to be small, numerous and rounded. Unlike Gwaytihl's naturalistic faces, the chins are not prominent and the ears, if present, are simple semi-circular forms without naturalistic detail (fig. 31).

Edensaw's small sculptural pieces impress one with the great attention which has been given to intergrating each part of each figure to the whole composition. Because of the smooth roundness of the limbs, the relative vertical shortness of animal faces, the large open eyes and small round nostrils, these carvings have a somewhat gentle, appealing quality. Fortunately they also have superb design and proportion, coupled with masterful handling of detail, which preserves their power as sculpture.

Edensaw produced a number of carved animal-form bowls in wood and in argillite which are easily identified by the characteristics of their sculptural and two-dimensional details (fig. 17). Interestingly I know of only two masks which can be solidly attributed to him on stylistic or documentary grounds (fig. 32 and American Museum of Natural History). I have seen *no* complex argillite figure groups or pipes and only one argillite shaman figure which I feel can be safely attributed to Edensaw's hand, although many of these have been so identified over the years. There are a number of headdress frontlets which must surely be by him and at least one (American Museum of Natural History 16/241: Holm and Reid, 1976:177) which is not only stylistically a perfect example but is identified as being made by Tahaygen, Charles Edensaw's personal Haida name. Several other frontlets which I once thought to be his (Holm and Reid, 1976:176-77) I am now certain are not.

Several large poles have been attributed to Charles Edensaw (British Columbia Provincial Museum 1 and 2, Ubersee Museum). These poles differ from the documented models as full sized poles generally do. It is certainly possible they are the work of Edensaw. If so it should be relatively easy to identify others he may have carved by careful comparison of poles, or even old photographs, with these three. However, the Provincial Museum house-posts are quite similar to the large pole formerly in the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Berlin which seems to be solidly documented as the work of Edensaw's uncle, Albert Edward Edensaw.

John Robson

The Skidegate artist John Robson was among those who carved model poles for John Swanton and made drawings of crest figures for Charles Newcombe, giving us solidly documented examples of his two- and three-dimensional work. At his best Robson was a very good artist indeed. The model poles which he carved as illustrations for Swanton show his mastery of the traditions and techniques of the art. If by comparison with the Edensaw carvings in the same set they seem somewhat more static, they also more truly represent the character of full sized Haida poles. As mentioned they have been mistaken for Edensaw's work, and although they resemble the Edensaw poles in many ways they differ from them in as many details. The formline elaborations of wings and fins can be compared directly with the corresponding details on Edensaw's pieces to illustrate these differences (figs. 33, 34). Both artists chose to represent wings with an ovoid shoulder joint to which is appended a large formline U enclosing a secondary-tertiary complex, and extending in two (Edensaw's usual choice) or three (Robson's usual choice) feathers (figs. 26, 27). Robson's joint ovoid is more angular with greater width variation than Edensaw's. The long and rather narrow inner ovoid is high in its socket unlike the typically nearly concentric inner ovoid favoured by Edensaw. The U forms are more angular as well. Robson favoured the familiar double U and surrounding tertiary U, while Edensaw used rounded double Us enclosed in a single line (without tertiary space), tertiary split Us, or in one case, secondary stacked Us. Robson frequently bevelled his tertiary areas, while Edensaw characteristically used a rounded hollow form. In this well-documented group of carvings it is remarkable how completely consistent the two artists were in their choices of design elements and in the form in which they rendered them.

Robson (along with David Shakespeare, according to Deans' notes) made the large and detailed wooden model of the Skidegate "Bear's Mouth" House now in the Field Museum. A model of the same house in the National Museum of Man in Ottawa (fig. 35) is stylistically like the Deans model, and both match in several respects sketches in the Field Museum and the British Columbia Provincial Museum collections acquired by Dr. Newcombe from

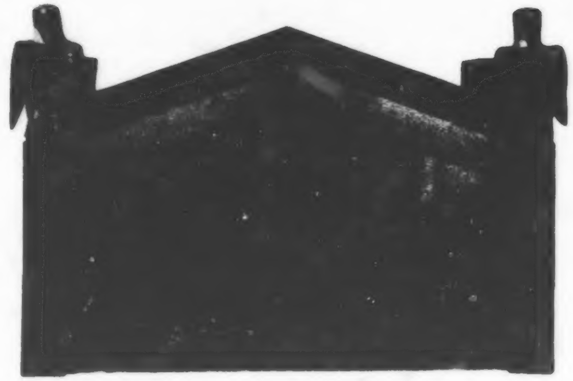


Figure 35. Model house attributed to Robson (National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 1556)

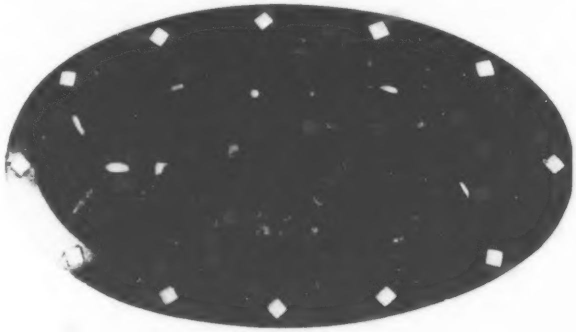


Figure 36. Argillite platter attributed to Robson (National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 1425)

Figure 37. Argillite chest attributed to Robson (Hauberg Collection)

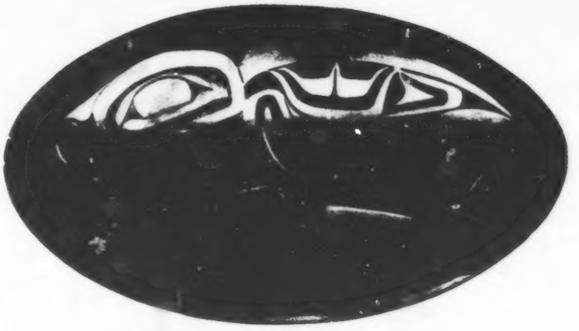


Figure 38. Argillite platter attributed to Cross (McMichael Canadian Collection)

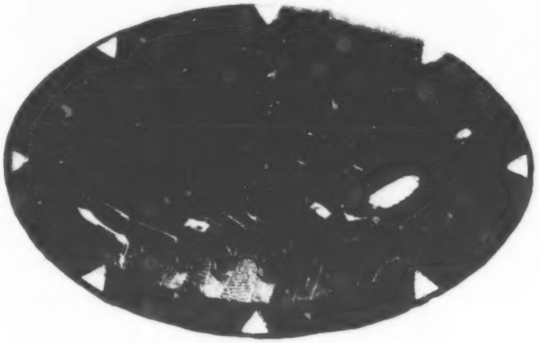


Figure 39. Argillite platter attributed to Cross (Alaska State Museum, II B 824: photo, Bob De Armond, Juneau, Alaska)

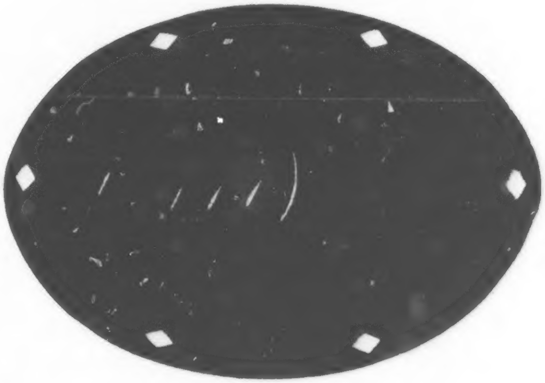


Figure 40. Argillite platter attributed to Cross (Private Collection)

John Robson. The basic arrangement of both facade designs are similar to some of the sketches, and the structure of the bear's forelegs is so uniform that it has the status of a John Robson convention.

The most striking idiosyncrasy in the Robson drawings is the peculiar form of the cheek designs and the analogous detail of the salmon-trout's head ovoids (fig. 36). The standard arrangement in formline structured heads, sanctioned by generations of use throughout the northern coast, was apparently seldom followed by Robson. Instead of outlining the entire lateral contour of the head with the primary formline and defining the outer lower corner of the eye socket with a secondary filler, Robson defined the entire eyesocket with a single formline ovoid, joining the formlines of the jaw and mouth to it. The difference in the appearance of the two approaches is not obvious, expecially if the cheek design is not in the secondary colour, but the concepts involved are radically different.

In argillite carvings which appear to be Robson's work the salmon-trout's heads often show what appears to be a standard cheek design, but the ground space separating the cheek from the jaw formline merges with the outer edge of that formline, rather than the usual inner edge, preserving the integritiy of the eyesocket formline ovoid (fig. 22c).

This detail alone is distinctive enough to suggest Robson as the artist, but his documented sketches, corroborated by the Bear's Mouth House design in Ottawa, show another unique feature. Robson brought the formline of the end of this salmon-trout's head ovoids out and around the U of the snout, joining at the upper corner (figs. 22c, 35, 36). In many ways, especially in his double-line bordered crosshatching, Robson's argillite engraving closely resembles Edensaw's, and I had misidentified them as such (fig. 37). However, Edensaw's salmon-trout's heads never show the feature described above (fig. 226).

A very interesting, and perhaps significant, example of this confusion is the case of an argillite chest in the United States National Museum (Barbeau, 1957, fig. 64) with the name COWTLINS engraved on the lid. Barbeau attributed it to Edensaw (as I once did) and described the engraved letters as "meaningless capitals." I now believe, on stylistic grounds, that the chest was made by John Robson. Charles Newcombe recorded Robson's Haida name as Gwaiskunagiatlens. Gwaiskun must refer to the village of that name. Thus COWTLINS may very well be a signature. Deans mentions that the owner of the Bear's Mouth house at Skidegate, of which Robson made several models, was named "Goatlins" and was the "grandfather of the parties who built this model" (Deans, n.d.:57)—another link between Robson and the name Gaitlens. It is not at all surprising that the art of Edensaw and Robson is similar. They were close friends, and Robson became Charles Edensaw's stepfather when he married Edensaw's widowed mother (Blackman, 1980). Barbeau (1957:150) identifies Edensaw's stepfather (Robson) as "Gauhlens."[2]

The two artists developed similar styles in sculpture as well, but the differences can be recognized (figs. 33, 34). Animal faces are longer in proportion to their width in Robson's totem poles. The stylized planes of the face are defined in classic Haida fashion—only in the small, naturalistic humanoid faces do the ovoid eyesockets give way to smoothly modelled cheeks. The eyesocket is hollowed under the eye and the space separating eye and lip is greater, consistent with the greater height of the face. Eyebrows are curved and tapered, but the ends are often square, unlike the rounded form typical of Edensaw.

The figures tend to be less intertwined than those on Edensaw's poles. The limbs are rounded, but straighter than Edensaw's, as are the claws or fingers.

Before I had carefully compared the American Museum of Natural History's poles for their specific differences in style, I had thought that a house frontal pole (Field Museum 17836) from one of the model houses made for James Deans as part of his World Columbian Exposition model of Skidegate village, was Edensaw's work. I thought the same of a pole in the same style in the collection of the Lowie Museum (fig. 34). They are certainly by Robson, and in fact the Field Museum house model was described by Deans as having been made by "two Haidas named John Robson and David Skilldonass" (Deans' notes, Field Museum).

Suspended in one corner of the house interior is a box drum painted with the design identified by Deans as "the Ellanga or Thunderbird." The painting resembles the bird drawings which Robson made for Newcombe. It also bears a remarkable resemblance to the painting on a spruce root hat in the British Columbia Provincial Museum, which in turn shares stylistic features with other documented Robson pieces. Five other hats which resemble it in style also have the same star with four points of alternate red and black painted on top (Holm and Reid, 1975, no. 64).

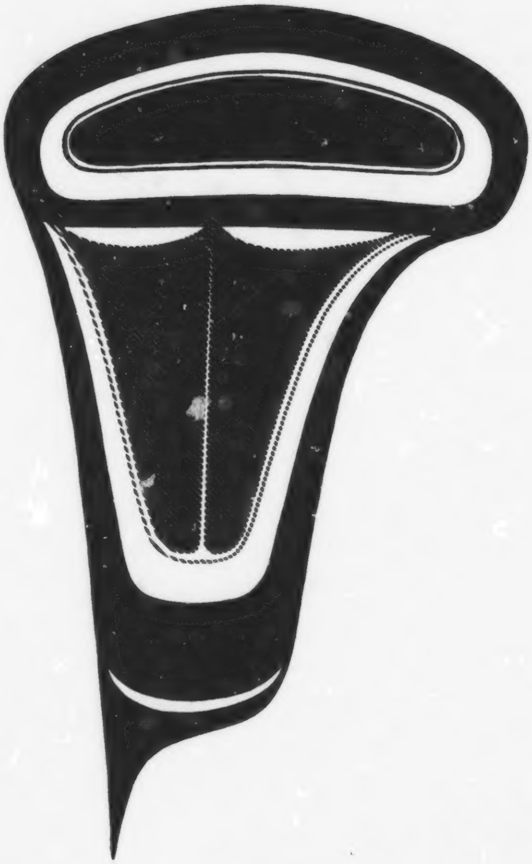


Figure 41. Formline fin design, after Cross

John Cross

The artists who drew the 27 tattoo designs published in John Swanton's *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* were all identified by name. The three designs by Edensaw are easily recognized, exhibiting the typical characteristics of his style. Five of the drawings were done by Wiha, and the remaining nineteen were the work of John Cross. They are distinctive in several ways. Cross, like John Robson, favoured an unusual cheek structure in his designs in which the formline ovoid of the eyesocket is unbroken (figs. 38, 39, 40). It differs from Robson's solution in having a formline U appended to the ovoid in the cheek area, with the formline of the lower jaw attached to the U. Usually the cheek is elaborated with one or two secondary Us. Teeth are either U form, sharp curved triangles, or a combination of both.

---

[2] George MacDonald has informed me that the Bear's Mouth house was built by Giatlins of "those born at Rose Spit." I believe he was married to Charles Edensaw's mother. John Robson was his nephew (not grandson) and heir. Robson raised a pole in her honour at Skidegate, of which he made a fine model now in the British Columbia Provincial Museum.

John Cross' two-dimensional compositions are multi-angular, with ovoids, Us and related figures moving in every direction over the designed space. Often the tapered, curved legged Us are attached in multiples to ovoids and to other Us. The U complexes are very consistent in their form and detail (fig. 41). The legs are tapered and flare outward as they near the joined formline. Typical elaboration consists of a secondary U or a pair of secondary Us with wide open relief slits at the base, and surrounded by a narrow tertiary U, bevelled outward. Tertiary split Us occur, but infrequently.

Cross' usual ovoids resemble an old northern form with relatively massive, angular formlines, slightly peaked at the top. The nearly concentric inner ovoid fills the available space, leaving a narrow, bevelled tertiary area (figs. 41, 22d). Eyelid lines are sharply constricted. An unusual form of stylized face was favoured by John Cross as an ovoid elaboration (fig. 22e). It features a long eyebrow with central hump and upturned forward end, with a small, narrow eye close under it. A single, lower, eyelid runs closely under the eye.

John Cross' flat designs are almost frantic in their dynamic action. The twists and reverses of flippers, tails and wings are accentuated by their interlocking tapered U forms. He used few variations on his standard design elements, repeating the same U complexes over and over in different proportions and sizes. If a bit of ground along the edge of a platter needed filling, a broad primary U was based on the design edge, enclosing the double secondary U and surrounding bevelled tertiary space. A few other artists used a similar filler in this way, but for Cross it was the usual solution.

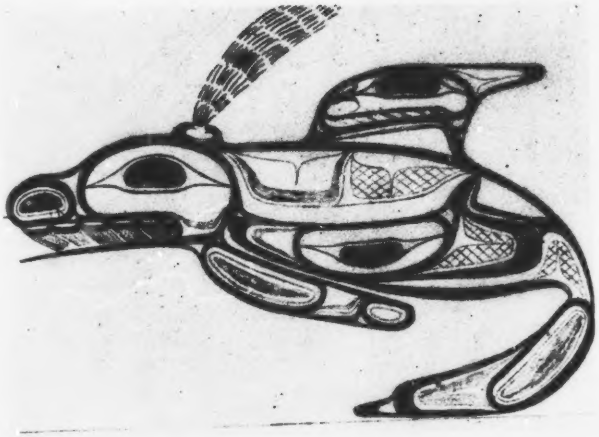


Figure 42. Whale drawing attributed to Price (BCPM, 10166)

Figure 43. Spruce root hat painting attributed to Price (Huntington Collection)

Tom Price

Will the *real* Tom Price please stand up? In a 1971 issue of *Syesis* Trisha Glatthaar Gessler, a former student of Wilson's, published a short paper on the style of the Skidegate artist Tom Price. The paper was based in part on her master's thesis and includes an analysis of the characteristics of twelve remarkable drawings collected by Dr. Newcombe and now in the collection of the British Columbia Provincial Museum (fig. 42). These drawings are particularly significant for students of style because they illustrate the consistency of a single artist in representing a sizeable group of Haida crest animals. Based on his assessment of the evidence, Wilson Duff had attributed these drawings to Tom Price, although they unfortunately were not clearly identified by Newcombe. Although one could argue that the evidence upon which Wilson based his attribution was circumstantial, the Tom Price identification is not unbelieveable. Barbeau (1957:32-85) identified pieces of a wide range of styles as Tom Price's work, but the largest single stylistically unified group of them seems to be related to the Newcombe drawings. Trisha Gessler assembled photographs of many examples and made a good case for their Tom Price origin.

The problem is that there are really two, or perhaps three, very similar, but discernible, styles in the body of work which students of Northwest Coast art have been loosely gathering under the name of Tom Price. At one point I considered the possibility that the two major variations were examples of the changes in an artist's work over a period of time. I gave up this idea when I found that many examples of both styles, represented in argillite carvings, were collected contemporaneously, most of them in the 1880s. As Dr. Carole Kaufmann suggests in her Ph.D. dissertation *Changes in Haida Indian Argillite Carving, 1820 to 1910*, such pieces, being made for sale and not for native use, have a good chance of being new when collected. It is my contention that although an artist's style may change radically over the years his work at any given period will be stylistically consistent. The real clinchers are two argillite chests, representing perfect examples of the two style variations, each in its fullest development, collected on the same day in October 1883, at Skidegate by James G. Swan (Renwick Gallery, 1974, figs. 77, 79). There is no question that these are by different artists. The original confusion lay in the fact that some works by the two were less obviously dissimilar.

The "Tom Price" of Dr. Newcombe's drawings may not be either of these, although there remains the chance that the drawings, having been done about 1900, some years after the latest solid collection dates of argillite carvings attributed to him, differ from those carvings because of progressive changes in the artist's style. But the more critically I compare the drawings with these engravings, the more excuses I require for the differences between them. In addition to the differences in formline weight and angularity (especially in the formline Us)

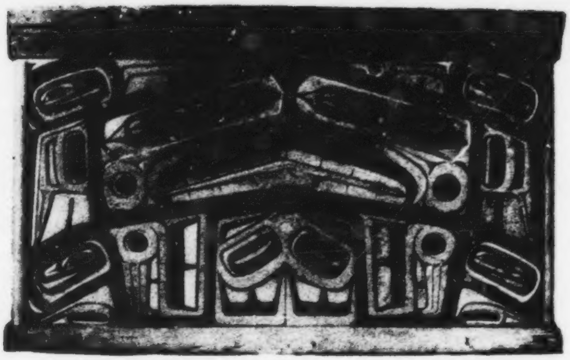


Figure 44. Chest attributed to Price (Field Museum, 79712)

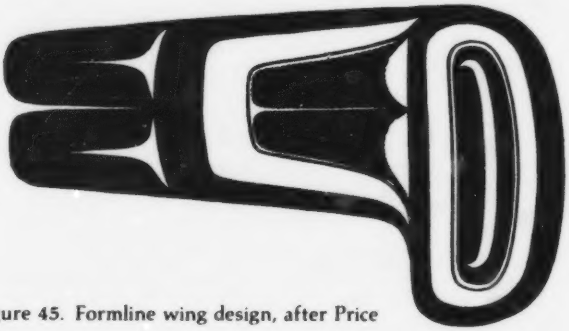


Figure 45. Formline wing design, after Price

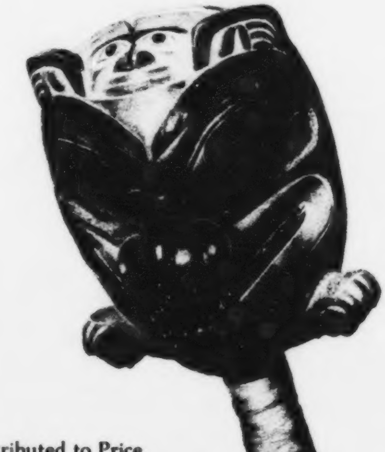


Figure 46. Rattle attributed to Price (Smithsonian Institution, 89076)

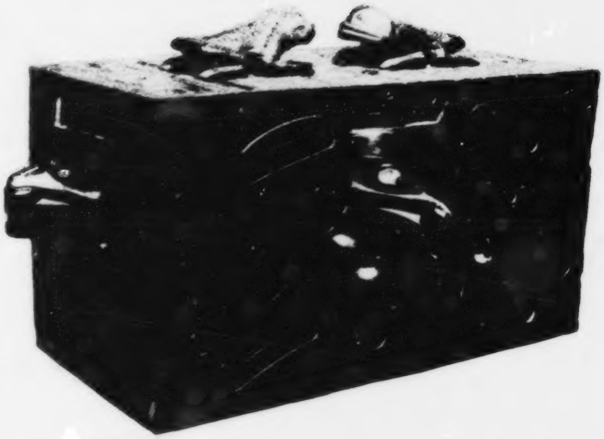


Figure 47. Argillite chest attributed to Price (Holm Collection)

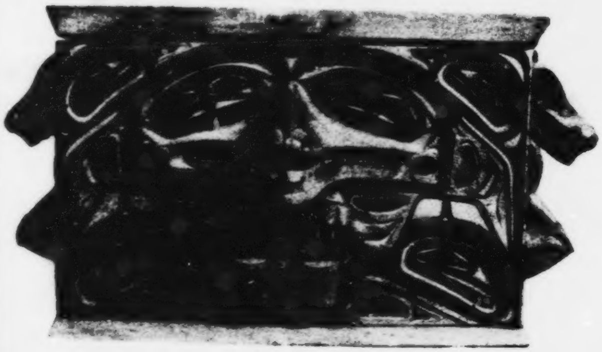


Figure 48. Small chest attributed to Price (Übersee Museum, c 498)

there are some very consistently differing choices of design elements. Newcombe's artist utilized a standard two point secondary cheek design in the faces of his creatures (fig. 42), while the argillite carvings of "Tom Price" almost never do. One of the few exceptions noted is in the sea bear platter illustrated by Trish Gessler (1971; fig. 3) which interestingly is more like the Newcombe drawings in a number of ways than any of the other argillite "Price" pieces. Yet even it differs from them in significant detail. In the drawings the almost universal elaboration of a formline U is a split U, either formed by a tertiary line or as a red secondary split U (figs. 42, 43). The double secondary U separated by a tertiary space from the enclosing primary U, by far the most used elaboration in the argillite pieces, never occurs in the analogous elements of the drawings and only in the bodies of two of them is there a very broad and open form of the design, superficially related to the similar designs in the argillite engravings.

In the drawings, every stylized face in an ovoid joint lacks eyebrows, while similar faces in the argillite pieces invariably have eyebrows. None of the feet in the drawings is constructed of ovoid joints with attached claws, the usual form in the argillite platters and chests, although a few of these show feet somewhat similar in construction to those in the drawings. One of the most striking and frequent features of the argillite designs is an inverted C relief in inner ovoids—almost unknown in northern Northwest Coast art otherwise. None of the Newcombe drawings shows it.

Altogether the points of difference are many, but a general feeling of similarity remains, and I prefer not to slam the door hastily on the possibility of there being only a single artist represented here. There is no question that the artist who produced the drawings for Dr. Newcombe also painted traditional native objects. I have seen three spruce root hats (fig. 43 and Gessler, 1971: figs. 6, 7 and Holm, 1965: fig. 6) and a number of painted wooden spoons which match the drawings perfectly in all respects of style and detail. They must all be from the same era of this artist's career. One of the hats has woven cylinders attached to the top, while the other two bear red five-pointed star designs.

With the caveat that the identification of the prolific and gifted carver of argillite with which we are dealing here is not established with certainty, I will continue to use the name Tom Price to designate his work. His style was bold and dramatic. It can, like that of John Cross, be characterized as multiangular, in that the primary formlines tend not to fall into a smoothly arched grid over the decorated surface. Consequently his work has a dynamic quality which sets it somewhat apart from the more sedate compositions usual in classic Haida art.

Price's formlines are of moderate weight without drastic changes in width. The Us are generally very angular while, in contrast, the ends of the relatively long, narrow ovoids are rounded. One large chest (fig. 44) features rather angular ovoids, but it matches every other detail of style so perfectly that it must be by the same hand. Ovoids are non-concentric, but often only moderately so. There are many perfectly round ovoids. The contrast of round ovoids is characteristic of this artist's style. I have already mentioned the distinctive use of an *inverted* C-shaped relief in the larger long inner ovoids (fig. 46). It appears in most of his carvings and paintings (figs. 44, 46, 47, 50, 51), although not in the Newcombe drawings. It is so unusual in northern Northwest Coast art generally and so frequent in this work that it can always be seen as a primary indicator. If other aspects of the design also agree with characteristic traits, the artist must be "Price." For example a fine rattle (fig. 46) in the United States National Museum of Natural History exhibits this unusual eye treatment. Comparison of the two-dimensional detail on the back of the rattle shows complete agreement, and the sculptural style of the bear's head is like those on argillite chests and totem poles by this same artist (fig. 47).

Another detail that indicates a Price attribution is an angular formline U enclosing a broad tertiary U around a pair of solid secondary Us, each of which has a broad, open, crescent relief at its base (fig. 45). The bases of the Us flair at their outer corners, giving the sides a sweeping curve. If carved, the tertiary U is bevelled down to its outer edge, as are the tertiary ovoids in eyes and joints. Ground areas and many other tertiary spaces, especially split Us, are recessed in an unusual way (figs. 47, 48, 49). Rather than being bevelled or hollowed in typical late nineteenth-century Haida fashion, the surface of the argillite or wood is carved back to a flat plane, leaving the tertiary lines to stand boldly out as narrow, flat ridges. Tertiary detail like this is very unusual for the late nineteenth century. The technique was never common, and the only other artists to use it consistently in such a bold, hard-edge manner were unknown Haida master pipe makers and wood carvers of the 1840s, a decade or more before Tom Price's birth (Duff *et al.*, 1967, no. 205).

Crescent and T reliefs in junctures, C-shaped reliefs in ovoids and the open areas at the bases of solid Us are wide and deeply bevelled. The boldness and depth of Price's relief carving is striking.

The accompanying three-dimensional carving matches the relief work in this boldness (figs. 46, 47, 48). Defined planes, sharp edges, deep modelling are standard. The

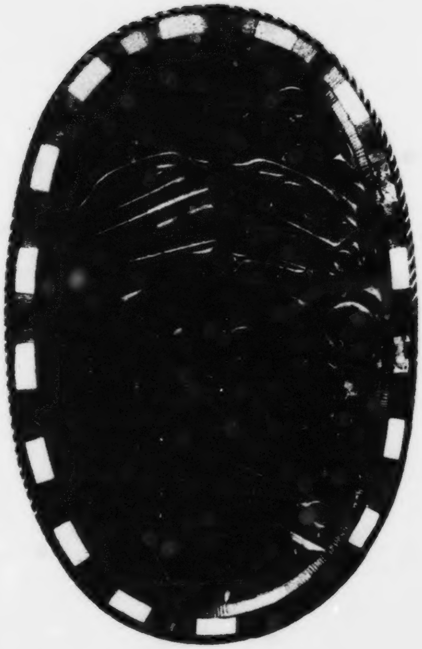


Figure 49. Argillite platter attributed to Price (National Museum of Man, Ottawa, VII B 825)

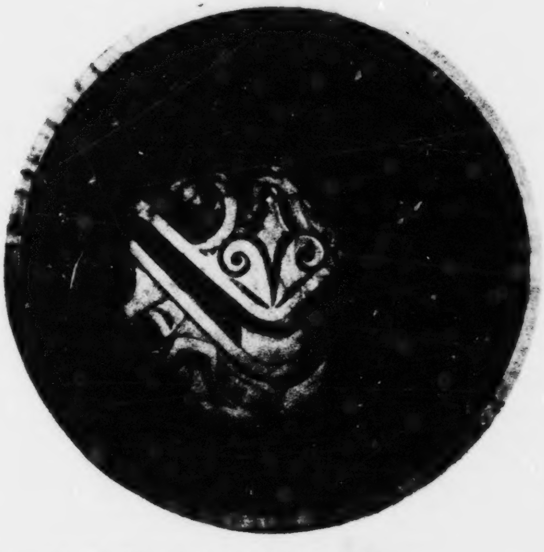


Figure 50. Argillite platter attributed to Price (American Museum of Natural History, 16 A1-611)

attenuated features, long tapered eyelids and angular junctures of the planes of the sculpture stand in extreme contrast to the rounded, restrained forms of Edensaw's work. That the work of these two artists rose contemporaneously from the same culture is strong testimony to the individualism of Haida artists working within the limits of a highly traditionalized design system.

The Master of the Chicago Settee

The last of the six Haida artists whose work I have tried to describe must unfortunately remain nameless for now. I first became aware of his work as that of an artist with a powerful and distinctive individual style when I saw, many years ago, a spectacular painted and carved settee in the Field Museum (Holm, 1965: figs. 52, 57). When other examples of the same kind of work began to come to the attention of those of us who had been so impressed by the Field Museum piece, we attributed them to the "Master of the Chicago Settee." As more and more examples came to light slight variations in the style became apparent, some of which were similar to the style of the artist who we thought was Tom Price. So for a time, as I have mentioned, the work of the two artists was confused. Now I am certain we are dealing with at least two men, although I must admit that there are a few pieces which might have been made by either one. There are a good many pieces, however, that were very clearly made by one or the other.

This last body of work is also characterized by boldness and strength, but the compositions are restrained compared to those of Tom Price. Primary formlines tend to conform to classic, rectangular grid-like patterns without the dynamic angle changes of Price's designs (fig. 53). But they are not static designs by any means.

Typical examples of the Chicago Settee style have massive formlines with extreme variation in width. Some ovoid formlines are as much as five times wider at the top of the ovoid than at the ends, although most are much less exaggerated. Ovoids tend to be rounded, with considerable concavity on the lower side and corresponding convexity on the upper. Inner ovoids are long and tapered from the wide centre to narrow, round ends (fig. 54). They are extremely non-concentric, frequently nearly touching the surrounding formline ovoid at their upper edges. "Salmon trout's head" ovoids are not so tapered or non-concentric, but are distinctive in other ways (fig. 22g). The U forming the snout has a very wide end and radically tapering legs, the characteristic form of Us in this style. Interestingly the eyelid lines in these elaborated inner ovoids are remarkably like those in Price's work—

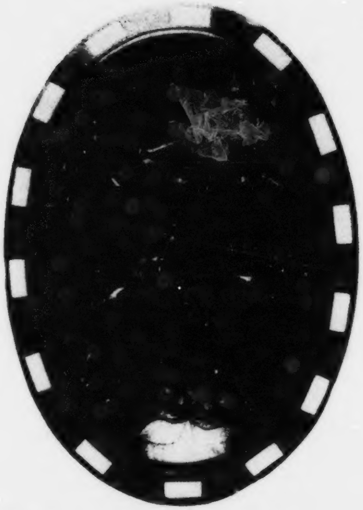


Figure 51. Argillite platter attributed to Price (Peabody Museum, Salem, E31728)

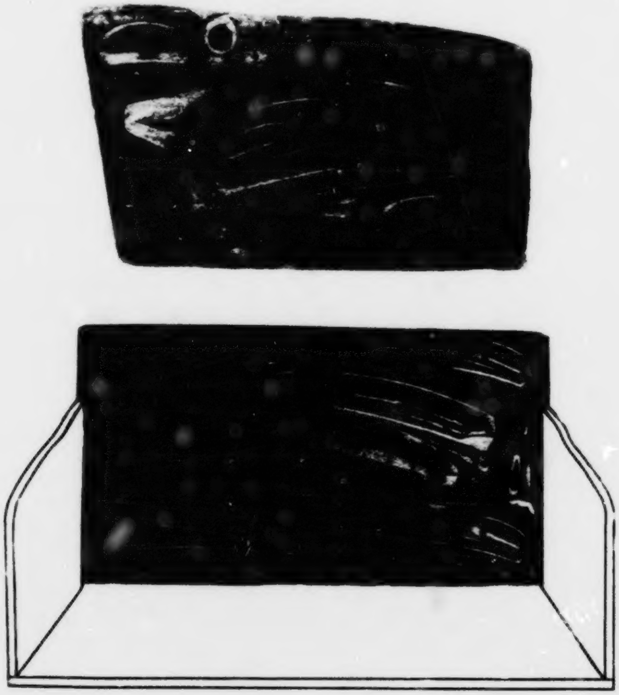


Figure 52. The "Chicago Settee" (Field Museum, 79595)

constricted and tapering to long and often assymmetric points, shorter on the forward end. Stylized faces in ovoids differ from Price's in lacking eyebrows (fig. 22h). In this detail they resemble the Newcombe drawings.

As mentioned the Us are exaggerated in width at the end, giving this artist the frequent opportunity to develop a formline ovoid in the end of the U (fig. 54). The sharply tapered legs may enclose a tertiary split U which typically, in relief carved examples, has its edges raised all around as tertiary line, and has a very narrow, constricted split which is carried only part way to the end of the tertiary U (fig. 57). In contrast, Price's split Us are flared open at the base and reach very nearly to the U end. Edensaw's are open and smoothly curved at the base and frequently extend right to the limit of the tertiary space.

Much more common in this style than the split U is the double secondary U with enclosing tertiary U, and the form of this complex is unique (fig. 54). The secondary Us extend from leg to leg of the primary formline U, but taper rapidly to very narrow ends. This taper is so extreme that the tertiary space around the secondary Us increases in width from narrow points at the base to a broad and deep end. The dividing slit between the secondary Us is very narrow and frequently stops short of the base, which is set off from the joined primary formline by correspondingly narrow slits. The whole complex of bold primary U with broad end and tapered legs, similarly broad and tapered tertiary U and even more tapered solid secondary Us with extremely narrow relieving slits forms an easily recognizable indicator of this distinctive style. If carved, tertiary Us and smaller ovoids are bevelled to their outer edges. Large ovoid sockets and split Us are generally hollowed, but with abruptly raised rims.

Some other characteristics of the style are complex three-point cheek designs constructed of typically swelling ovoids and tapered massive Us (figs. 52, 55, 58), hands constructed of short, rounded fingers and thumbs based on the *concave* side of a stylistically typical ovoid (figs. 52, 53, 55), and a unique clawed foot (figs. 52, 56). This unusual talon has a small, round ovoid joint, two long and sharply hooked claws relieved at the bends, and a broad thumb claw bent and extending to join the hooked tip. Tom Price also had a favourite complex claw design which consists of a large, round ovoid joint and three long, tapered and closely parallel claws which bend nearly at right angles near their points (figs. 44, 49).

The few examples of sculpture by this artist which have been identified by their two-dimensional detail share the controlled boldness characteristic of his work. The planes tend to be rounded, even bulging, in contrast to the lean angularity of Price's work. Although not

Figure 53. Argillite chest panel attributed to the Master of the Chicago Settee (American Museum of Natural History, T#22717)

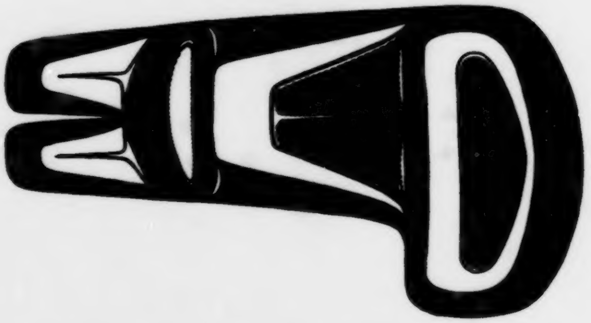


Figure 54. Formline wing design, after the Master of the Chicago Settee

Figure 55. Chest attributed to the Master of the Chicago Settee (University Museum, University of Pennsylvania)

Figure 56. Paddle attributed to the Master of the Chicago Settee (De Young Museum, 67-10)

Figure 57. Haida house post

certainly identified, the powerful housepost formerly in the Field Museum (fig. 57) could very well have been carved by this unnamed artist. I believe that he was the painter of the striking mural on the facade of Chief Gold's Moon House at Second Beach near Skidegate. At first glance the formlines seem too narrow, and the composition too light and open, but this might be a function of the very large scale (over forty feet in length, judging by the 6 foot 6 inch diameter of the Moon crest's corona). The similarity in the style of the detail to that of the Chicago Settee was brought to my attention by Harry Calkins, and once compared the similarity is obvious. Long Us with radically tapered legs, several with ovoid elaboration in the broad ends of the U, are the clearest indicators. The structure of the beaks of the "Moon Birds" (Duff, 1970:248, 249) is straight out of his repertoire, as are the complicated cheek designs (fig. 58). Painted apparently in the 1870s, it falls well within the era of this artist's developed style.

Is Attribution Really Possible?

Is it really possible or practical to attribute authorship of a Northwest Coast art object to an individual artist on the basis of style? I believe it is, with certain obvious limitations. It would be ridiculous to suggest that we could group all Northwest Coast art objects, by artists, without error. Even those artists whose work is best known and most solidly documented produced pieces which must puzzle us. Still there is much which can be identified. The possibilities and problems are illustrated in the case of the most prolific and best known of these five Haida artists, Charles Edensaw. There are many pieces which I feel confident to be his work. They display all the characteristics exhibited by works known without any doubt to be his, and none of those characteristics not seen in his documented works. On the other hand there are some which seem to conform to an Edensaw style but which must be very early—from his formative years—or very late and produced during his decline. Some which seem Edensaw-like have strange distortions of conventional shapes, rigid rules of structure broken illogically, anachronisms such as master's forms in novice's composition, which set them apart from the consistently characteristic work of the artist. It's quite possible to make mistakes. I've made many of them, a few of which I have recognized and hopefully corrected. More careful comparisons, yet to be uncovered documentation and better understanding of the ways in which artists develop may improve our chances for accurate attribution. We know a lot more about the subject than we did a few years ago, but there is still much to learn.

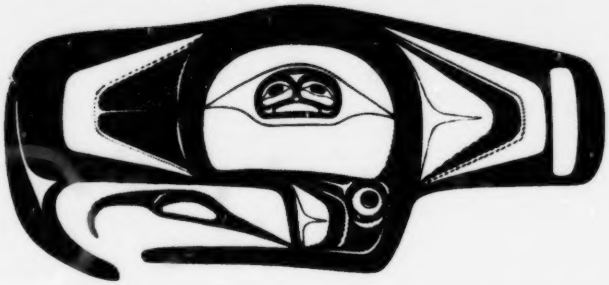


Figure 58. Formline of bird head, from Captain Gold's Moon House, attributed to Master of the Chicago Settee

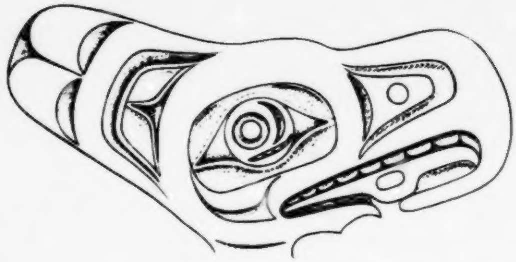


Figure 59. Formline of bird head, from a headstone attributed to Charles Edensaw

References

Barbeau, Marius

1929 "Totem Poles of the Gitksan," *Bulletin 61*, Anthropological Series 12, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa.

1957 "Haida Carvers in Argillite," *Bulletin 139*, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa.

Blackman, Margaret

1980 Personal communication.

Duff, Wilson, B. Holm and B. Reid

1967 *Arts of the Raven*, Vancouver.

Duff, Wilson

1970 "On Wardwell's 'Partial Rediscovery of a Northwest Coast Monument',": *Curator*, Vol. 13, no. 4, 243-250, New York.

Gessler, Trisha

1971 "A Stylistic Analysis of Twelve Haida Drawings," *SYESIS*, Vol. 4, 245-252, Victoria.

Holm, Bill

1965 *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*, Seattle.

1967 "What Makes an Edensaw? (2-D Version)" unpublished note.

1974 "Structure and Design," *Boxes and Bowls*, Washington, D.C.

Holm, B. and B. Reid

1975 *Form and Freedom: a Dialogue on Northwest Coast Indian Art*, Houston.

Kaufmann, Carole

1969 *Changes in Haida Indian Argillite Carvings, 1820 to 1910*, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA.

von Sydow, Eckart

1923 "Die Kunst der Naturvölker und der Vorzeit," *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte I*, Berlin.

The following paper by Wilson Duff is a remarkable piece of scholarship. I was with Wilson during its conception and writing and so observed the process. The immediate inspiration for it was, of course, the carving of a Nootka canoe that summer of 1964 by David Frank and Paul Sam in Thunderbird Park, a project which, as the article makes clear, Wilson followed keenly and in detail. The facts he presents are, as usual, unassailable and the conclusion, that the Nootka canoe's "parent—or one of its parents—was an open skin boat, the Eskimo umiak" seems to follow inevitably from his evidence. Yet that is a radical hypothesis and one that has been curiously ignored—neither disputed nor accepted—by other scholars since it was first published. The logical presentation of data, discussion, and conclusion as set forth in the paper do not, I think, represent the actual mental process by which Wilson reached that conclusion but are, rather, a rationalization after the fact which was pure intuition. In that respect, this paper on a basically utilitarian artifact foreshadows much of his later work with Northwest Coast Indian art and philosophy. It brought home to me the recurring anguish he felt in his perceived need to marry the truths of insight with scholarly respectability. It was a dilemma of genius.

D.N.A.

Thoughts on the Nootka Canoe

Wilson Duff

Reprinted from the annual report of the British Columbia Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology for 1964

The seaworthiness and beauty of the Nootka dugout canoe have been admired by mariners of other nations ever since they began to come to the Northwest Coast. There is even a suggestion that the famous Yankee clipper ship may have borrowed the rakish bow line of the canoe, which may or may not be true, but shows the sort of compliments the vessel evokes (Drucker, 1951, p. 11). In the annals of small-boat navigation, a proud place is held by the *Tilikum*, a 38-foot Nootka canoe converted into a small three-masted schooner, in which Captain J. C. Voss in 1901 embarked from Victoria on a voyage of some 40,000 miles across the world's oceans. The Indians of the neighbouring coastal tribes also admired this fine sea-going vessel; in some cases they made copies of it, but more often they chose to acquire Nootka-make models by trade. The canoe was constructed in many sizes, from tiny one-man fishing-boats to huge cargo-carrying vessels 50 feet or more in length. However, its most efficient and seaworthy size was most probably the 30- to 35-foot canoe in which the Nootka and some of their southern neighbours ventured into the open ocean to thrust harpoons into whales. It was the whaling complex more than anything else that distinguished the culture of the Nootka from that of other Northwest Coast groups. And in the whaling complex an element of fundamental importance was the Nootka canoe.

My present concern is with the remote ancestry of this distinctive craft. My hypothesis is that it reveals its ancestry in its form. It has a number of unusual features of construction and arbitrary details of ornamentation which are so distinctive that they require an historical explanation, and the best explanation seems to be that its parent—or one of its parents—was an open skin boat, the Eskimo umiak.

The idea of seeking a relationship between a dugout canoe of the Nootka and a skin boat of the Eskimo is perhaps not as strange as it might first appear. The word "Eskimo" usually conjures up the igloos and dog sleds of the Canadian Arctic, but actually the most numerous and most typical Eskimos were the people of the Alaskan shores of Bering Sea and the North Pacific, whose ways of life were in many respects similar to those of the Northwest Coast Indians. In particular, the Bering Sea Eskimos and their Asiatic neighbours, the Chukchee, had a whaling complex which in its equipment, techniques, and rituals was strikingly like that of the Nootka.[1] One of the whales they hunted was the California Gray, of the same herd that provided the Nootka with most of their catch as it migrated northward in the spring. The boat from which they thrust their harpoons was of similar size to the Nootka whaling-canoe, with a similar number of men in the crew and a similar division of duties among them. Like the canoe, it was propelled by means of single-bladed paddles with crutch handles. But rather than being a dugout of cedar it was an open boat made of a fitted wooden frame covered with skin, usually walrus hide. Of course, one would hardly expect to find a cedar dugout in use along the treeless shores of Bering Sea, just as one would not expect a walrus-hide boat on the west coast of Vancouver Island. However, if we assume that the whaling complexes of the two areas are related, it is reasonable to inquire whether the boats themselves are also in some way related. And it appears to me that the Nootka canoe is indebted to the umiak for many of its distinguishing characteristics; it is in effect a dugout made on the pattern of the umiak, or perhaps more accurately an umiak made entirely of wood, further evolved and refined in the new medium.

The characteristic features of the Nootka canoe include first of all its flat bottom (flat both fore-and-aft and transversely), which lends stability and load-carrying capacity.[2] Another feature, also unusual in dugout canoes is that the sides flare outward as they rise to the gunwales. This flare is most pronounced at the bow and stern, also it culminates just below the gunwale line with a marked outward curl. The high projecting bow consists of a separate bow-piece, set deeply into the hull, to which it is joined with a carefully fitted (most often scarphed) joint. This bow has a poised and alert shape reminiscent of the head of an animal, with projections resembling ears, snout, and Adam's apple. While the Indian canoe-makers may call these projections "ears," "tongue protuding," and "uvula," they usually maintain that the resemblance to an animal head is purely coincidental; this just happens to be the proper form (Waterman, p. 22; Drucker, 1951, p. 83). The flat surface on top of the "ears" is stepped above the line of the gunwales, and the half-round groove between them is terminated by a peculiar V-shaped tongue extending down the centre line of the canoe.

---

[1] The similarities and their implications have been treated at length by Lantis, 1938; Heizer, 1943; Borden, 1951; Drucker, 1951 and 1955; Swanson, 1956; and others.

[2] The best description of this canoe is given by Waterman (1920), who calls it the "Chinook" canoe

The stern is also a separate piece, fitted deeply into the hull in a similar manner. It rises vertically, or nearly so, and is capped by a broad, flat platform of distinctive outline. The shape of this elevated platform permits the hull below it to flare sharply both horizontally and vertically. The prominent gunwales, reinforced with gunwale strips, sweep from bow to stern without meeting at either end.

The canoe is decorated in a number of places with rows of parallel grooved lines sometimes called "scratch marks." The canoe-makers do not usually ascribe any function to these, but feel that all good canoes should have them (Waterman, pp. 15-18). Such lines, usually three in number, are found along the length of the canoe on the inside surfaces just below the gunwales. Similar parallel grooves are found sloping down the outside of the throat of the bow, and down the outside of the stern. The flat surface on top of the "ears" of the bow is also decorated with rows of parallel grooves. In some cases these grooves are emphasized with paint, or replaced by painted lines.

In considering such features of construction and decoration, especially those which seem arbitrary or functionless, we should be aware of what might be called "the conservatism of culture." This is the sort of resistance to change which in our own culture has left us with functionless buttons on the sleeves of our jackets, electric Christmas-tree lights in the shape of candles, and vinyl wallpaper which imitates wood panelling. Mariners are perhaps as conservative a group as any: witness the slow and grudging change in hull form in the revolution from sail to steam, and the useless funnels on modern diesel-driven ocean liners, and the simulation of wooden planking on many of our new moulded fibreglass hulls. New forms often retain characteristics of their predecessors, and such is the case, I suggest, with the Nootka canoe.

The umiak was a vessel admirably suited to conditions in the Arctic, and most probably it evolved there, from Asiatic predecessors.[3] Light and roomy, it combined good speed, outstanding load-carrying capacity, and exceptional seaworthiness. It was easy to beach and easy to transport over land by sled. The framework was economical in its use of wood, yet its skilful and sophisticated construction gave it a resilient strength. The skin cover (a single large walrus hide, carefully split to give two pieces of half its thickness, might provide enough material for an entire umiak cover) was sewn with a waterproof stitch into a single unit, which was stretched over the frame and lashed to it at the bow, stern, and gunwales. This method of securing the cover, combined with the resilient strength of the frame, provided enough "give" so that the boat was very resistant to damage from floating ice. The umiak was used primarily for hunting large sea mammals and for travelling. It was made in a number of regional variations of form, and in a wide range of sizes up to 60 feet in length. It was used by all the Eskimo groups of Alaska and the Mackenzie delta, by the Aleuts, and by the Chukchee and Koryak of the Siberian shores of Bering Sea. It was also used in the eastern Arctic, along Hudson Strait and the Greenland coast, but in this eastern area it had degenerated to a heavy square-ended cargo boat used mostly by women. It is with the whaling-umiak of the Bering Sea Eskimo and Chukchee that we find the closest similarities with the Nootka whaling-canoe.

In the accompanying sketches the two vessels are compared. It may be seen that they are very similar in form and outline, both having essentially flat bottoms and flared sides. There are a similar number of seats or thwarts, and these are sewn in by a similar technique. The sternpost of the umiak rises almost vertically, and is capped by a broad T-shaped headboard which separates the gunwale poles and imparts to the skin cover the vertical and horizontal flare necessary to ward off following seas. The stern of the canoe preserves the character of the umiak stern-post and headboard, but it has been elevated by bending the gunwales upward, and also (as Waterman perceptively observed) it has been refined to the most slender and elegant form that will serve the purpose.

The bow of the umiak, although essentially similar in construction to the stern, tends to be higher, more pointed, and more projecting. The stempost is longer and less vertical than the sternpost, and its headboard is smaller, so that the gunwales come more to a point. Also, the gunwale poles often project farther at the bow than at the stern (*see*, e.g., Nelson, Fig. 155). In total effect, the projecting bow contrasts with the vertical stern, as on the Nootka canoe. The umiak bow was often fitted with a harpoon rest, a U-shaped device carved of ivory and seated on the headboard between the gunwale poles, in which the armed harpoon shaft was rested and through which the harpoon line was paid out (Nelson, p. 226, Pl. CVIIa). The "animal head" bow-piece of the Nootka canoe was also a harpoon rest, the groove between its ears serving that function and being so designated. While it requires some effort of the imagination, one can perhaps visualize this bow-piece (with all its peculiar details) as an evolution of the umiak bow assembly and harpoon rest. The canoe bow, like the stern, has been refined to the slenderest form that will perform its function.

---

[3] My main sources of information on the umiak are: Nelson, 1899; Adney and Chapelle, 1964; a model in the Provincial Museum; and models observed in the Lowie Museum, Berkeley.

A detail of umiak construction is that the stem and stern posts are fitted to the keelson, in some cases at least, by means of a scarphed joint (*see*, e.g., Adney and Chapelle, Fig. 169). It will be recalled that the bow and stern pieces of the Nootka canoe are fitted deep into the hull, often by means of "a very neat and peculiar scarph" (Swan, p. 36), carefully fitted and sewn. A scarph joint is a fairly sophisticated technological device, and the only other place I can recall its use on the Northwest Coast is in joining the sections of the Nootka whale-harpoon shaft (Drucker, 1951, p. 28).

The prominent gunwales of the canoe, sweeping in strong lines from bow to stern but not touching at either end, preserve the effect of the strong umiak gunwale poles. In cross-section, the side of the umiak shows a marked out-turn just below the gunwale, caused by the tendency of the skin to cling to the round pole. This feature, which performs the useful function of throwing off waves, is reproduced faithfully on the Nootka canoe.

The "scratch marks" inside the gunwales and down the bow and stern of the canoe are found at places which would mark the margins and lashings of the skin cover of the umiak. Perhaps they originally symbolized lashing or lacing, and when their significance was forgotten were preserved by custom, like the useless buttons on our jacket sleeves.

One further similarity between the two vessels may be added: both frequently bore painted designs on their sides depicting a supernatural creature which combined attributes of the serpent and the wolf (Nelson, p. 445; Drucker, 1951, p.83).

To this point, my consideration of the Nootka canoe has been based on information already available in published sources. During the summer of 1964 the temporary addition to the Museum staff of Nootka canoe-makers David Frank and Paul Sam, of Ahousat, gave an opportunity to obtain further information. The following details were learned from Paul Sam, who, as "speaker" for the Ahousat chief, is a sort of tribal historian. They concern magical beliefs and practices which were normally retained as well-guarded family secrets.

Much of the magic was focused upon the "scratch marks." Those down the throat of the bow, he said, were painted with a special mixture to quiet the whale. Those down the stern were similarly painted, to calm the sea. Those along the inside of the gunwales were rubbed with a special preparation which prevented the canoe from cracking, and also served as ownership marks to identify the chief who owned the canoe. The mixtures painted on the lines down the throat of the bow were made from secret formulas owned by the families of chiefs, and they varied with different tribes and different types of canoes. The head chief of Ahousat, for example, used three painted lines (red, black, and white); the second chief used two (red and black). One mixture known to the informant was made of a fine "clay" found under rocks on the beach, a red powdery fungus which grows on the bark of the cedar-tree, and sap squeezed from the wood of a small evergreen tree which grows in swampy places. The "clay" and the red powder (which was said to be the monthly flow of the cedar-tree) had to be obtained from places which were hit by the first rays of the rising sun, as they derived power from the sun. Pigments were added to give the mixture the desired colour. Its effect was to obliterate the human smell of the crew, so that the whale would not be aware of their approach. The mixture painted on the lines down the stern was the same except that instead of sap it used juice squeezed from the leaves of a special shrub. Its effect was to produce fine weather. Calm seas and success in the hunt were also ensured by charms kept by the "captain" in a box under his seat in the stern. Different families owned different charms; for example, the informant's grandfather had used certain mussel shells, berries, grasses, and a smooth round stone from a beach at Cape Beale. The lines along the inside of the gunwales were also sometimes painted with secret mixtures; in addition, their widths and patterns were varied according to the identity and rank of the chief. In the event that the canoe was smashed by the whale, the wreckage could be identified from this pattern.

The informant had forgotten the name of the small projection on the throat which the Makah call the "uvula." He did, however, say that a hole was bored into it

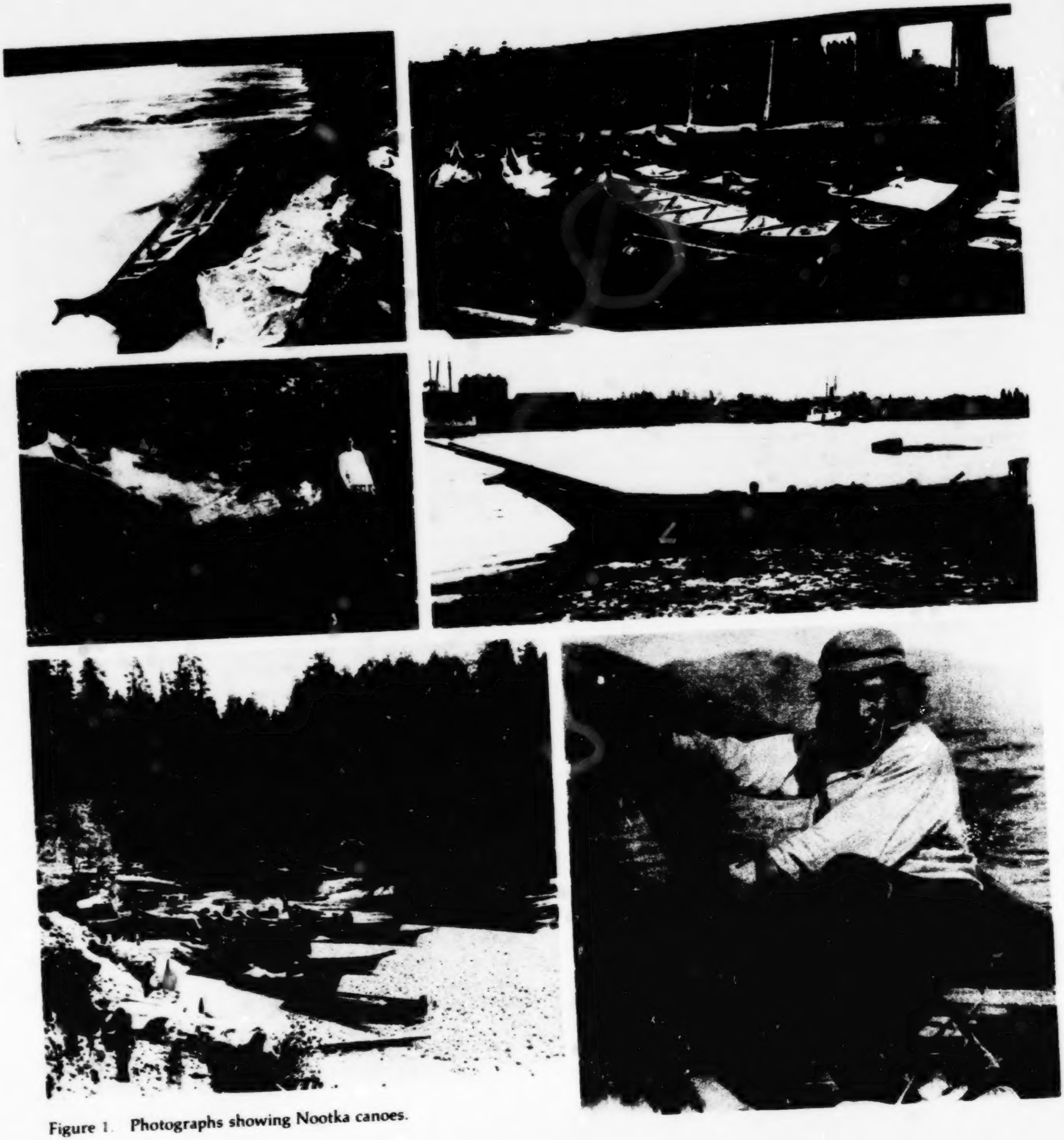
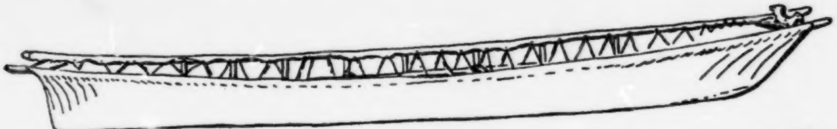
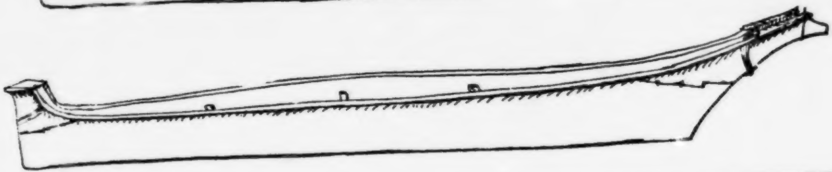


Figure 1. Photographs showing Nootka canoes.



UMIAK (Eskimo)

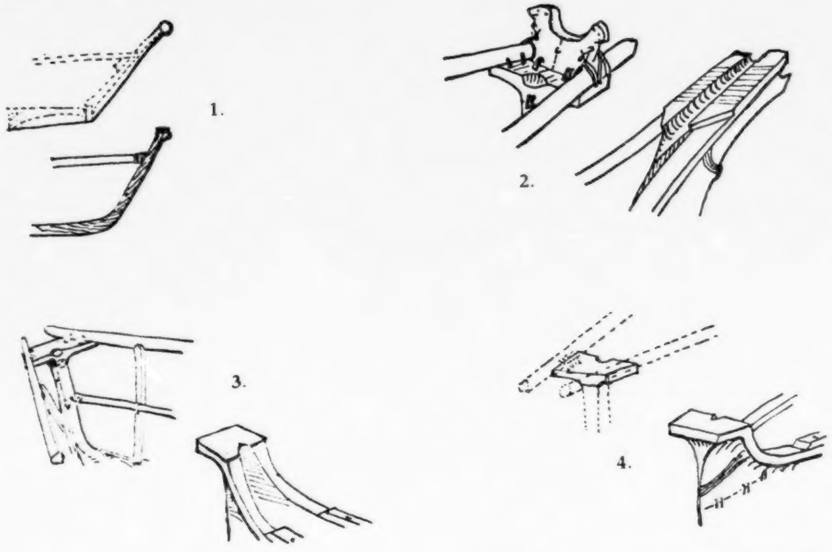


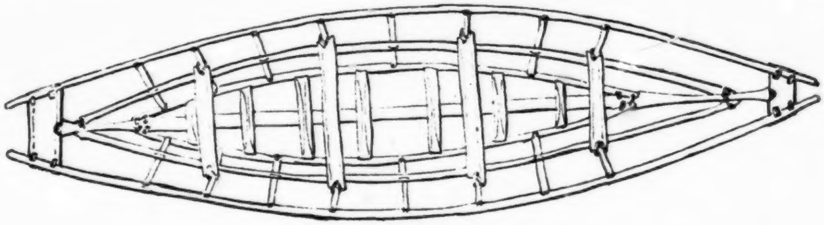
NOOTKA CANOE

DETAILS

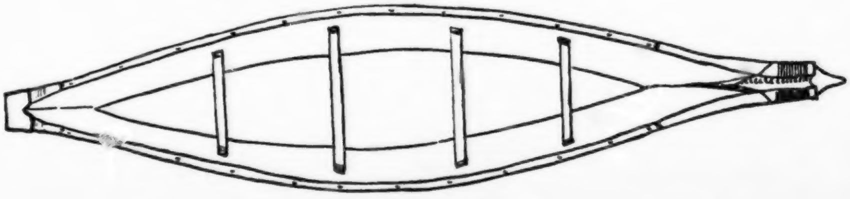
Comparisons of the Eskimo UMIAK to the NOOTKA CANOE.

1. Cross sections of gunwales.
2. Bows with harpoon rests.
3. Details of sterns
4. Details of sterns.





UMIAK
(model frame from Nelson, 1899, PL.LXX VIII)



NOOTKA CANOE

Figure 2. Sketches comparing features of the Nootka canoe and the Eskimo umiak. See text for discussion. Drawings by D'Oyly Rochfort.

and a certain millipede inserted as a charm to quiet the whale. This small creature, when squeezed or broken open, is said to exude a sharp perfume-like odour, and it was also used by seal-hunters, who rubbed it on their necks and faces to mask their human scent.

When I commented on the animal-like appearance of the canoe bow, the informant (I think inadvertently) likened it to the head of the timber wolf. He then explained that the Ahousat identified it as a wolf's head, and believed that "the killer whale when it steps ashore turns into a timber wolf." He had once questioned his grandfather on the matter, and had been told that the bow did represent the wolf, but that it should be kept secret. Such secrets lose their power when they become known to others. Perhaps for that reason the projection in front was not called a snout but a "handle," referring to its use in lifting the bow of the canoe. It is perhaps significant to note that the dual identity of the killer whale and wolf is an old belief shared by the Indians of this part of the Northwest Coast and the Eskimo.

The informant also confirmed that the sides of the canoe were often painted with designs representing Haitlik, the "lightning snake" which accompanies and derives its power from the Thunderbird. This was done to "give the canoe more power in travelling." On the whaling-canoe, the design was applied *and then painted over in black*, so that the whale wouldn't see it. The gray whale has very sharp eyesight, and it is wise to paint the canoe and paddles black to avoid detection. It is perhaps significant, again, to recall that the Eskimo often painted a somewhat similar creature on the sides of their umiaks.

These new details on the secret and magical aspects of the Nootka canoe can be interpreted to support the hypothesis of its umiak ancestry. The painting of the "scratch marks" with magical mixtures does not explain how they came to be there in the first place. Waterman was told that they were added only for finish, by custom. It now appears that they are endowed with magical significance, which certainly provides a better explanation for their persistence than the blind following of custom. But the question of their ultimate origin still remains, and the answer which I have suggested is that they are vestiges of the ancestral umiak. The killer whale-wolf concept associated with the canoe bow and the painted serpent-like design on the sides are also strong hints of an ancient Eskimo relationship.

If, indeed, the umiak is the direct ancestor of the Nootka canoe, both being an element of the same ancestral whaling complex, then the implications for Northwest Coast pre-history are interesting and important. That the direction of transmission of the complex was from the Eskimo to the Nootka can hardly any longer be questioned, and that it was a result of an umiak-borne migration of proto-Eskimo people down the coast seems more and more likely. Perhaps other complexes of Northwest Coast culture have the same ancestry. Perhaps to a greater degree than is presently recognized, the maritime culture of the Northwest Coast is built upon a proto-Eskimo base.

References

Adney, E. T., and Chapelle, H. I.

1964 The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America. *Bulletin* 230, United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

Borden, C. E.

1951 Facts and Problems of Northwest Coast Prehistory. *Anthropology in British Columbia*, No. 2, pp. 35-52. British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

Drucker, P.

1951 The Northern and Central Nootkan Tribes. *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* 144. Washington.

1955 Indians of the Northwest Coast. *American Museum of Natural History, Handbook* 10. New York.

Heizer, R. F.

1943 Aconite Poison Whaling in Asia and America: An Aleutian Transfer to the New World. *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* 133.

Lantis, Margaret

1938 The Alaskan Whale Cult and Its Affinities. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 40, pp. 438-464.

Nelson, E. W.

1899 The Eskimo about Bering Strait. *18th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology.*

Swan, J. G.

1868 The Indians of Cape Flattery. *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, 220.

Swanson, E. H.

1956 Nootka and the California Gray Whale. *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 52-56.

Waterman, T. T.

1920 The Whaling Equipment of the Makah Indians. *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (reprinted 1955).

IDEAS

The World is as Sharp as a Knife: Meaning in Northern Northwest Coast Art*

Wilson Duff

The understanding of the iconographic meaning of northern Northwest Coast art has lagged far behind the descriptive analysis of its form. I suggest that we are still very far indeed from a full understanding of its deeper levels of meaning. "Meaning" may be defined simply as the answers to two questions: "what things is it about?" and "what is it saying about them?" In other words, what are the subjects and what are the predicates? As for the "deeper" meanings, the question is: "what else, by analogy, is it also about?" What other topics and relationships does it also symbolize? Meaning is not just interpretation of the subject, or identification of the creature that is "represented." We are frequently able to take that first step. However, in Panofsky's (1939) terms, to do only that is to fail to penetrate beyond the pre-iconographic to the iconographic and iconological levels of meaning. It also fails to perceive the latent structural symbolism. "What does it mean?" is a much broader question than "what does it represent?" Existing studies of the art contribute to the understanding of other aspects of its significance. A knowledge of its cultural context (Gunther, 1966) is necessary to understand the process of its production and its significance in action. Analyses of its form (Haeberlin, 1918; Wingert, 1951; Holm and Reid, 1975) contribute immeasurably to its aesthetic appreciation. Bill Holm's descriptive analysis of the elements and rules of composition of the two-dimensional art has been a giant step toward the understanding of its deeper meanings (Holm, 1965). But to describe its form is not yet fully to explain its meaning.

Existing interpretations of the meanings of the iconography provide partial answers. The first of the usual explanations is that the images represent totemic crests, which metaphorically differentiate social groups. A second is that they represent spirit creatures or characters and episodes from the mythology. Art, that is to say, is a servant of the social and religious systems, and has its existence in order to make these tangible and visible. A third explanation, that art may be pure decoration or formal design for its own sake, speaks more in the language of form than of meaning. It is not my claim that any of these explanations are wrong. I only want to show that they fail to provide complete answers to questions of meaning raised by the art itself.

Examples will be shown of images whose meanings are not sufficiently explained by the currently-available interpretations. I want to suggest an additional way of looking at this art. It is my hypothesis that further agendas were also at work in it, such that it was coming to express more powerful symbols and therefore deeper and more general meanings. In addition, it was becoming an autonomous, non-verbal medium for thinking in images. Without relinquishing its other functions it was also invoking deeper symbols, and was becoming a primary language of thought in the medium of images. It was a system of imaging in which the deeper meanings were coming to receive as much conscious attention as the shallower ones.

Images. A number of concepts will be introduced. "Image" is the term I use for the principal segment of iconography. An image is typically a more complex unit than a single-figure depiction, showing an act or relationship as well as a subject. Having both a subject and a predicate it is a system which has structure. It is therefore a statement of meaning. Images have two aspects: content and structure. The iconographic content consists of "symbols." The inner structures may be called "armatures." Images are therefore structures consisting of symbols set upon armatures. Each image is unique, but regular rules presumably exist in the use of symbols and the kinds of armatures.

Symbols. Symbols in art are those pictorial figures which reveal what it is about, identify its subjects. The subjects may be things or acts. They may be depicted literally or metaphorically. In this art, they may literally depict the crests and mythic creatures of the social and religious systems. But also, or instead, they may metaphorically have reference to more general and abstract powers, or to that primary source of deep symbolism, the human body-self. For the art is also about being human; ultimately, about those aspects of being human which are most sacred and therefore most repressed and tabooed. Sexual parts and sexual acts are almost never depicted literally, but frequently receive metaphorical representation. Human faces, eyes, and whole figures are not subject to visual taboos, and may be used to express figuratively the tabooed parts and acts. "Beaks" and "mouths" carry great symbolic weight in this art.

---

* This paper is an abridged version of the presentation of this title given as part of the symposium on the Prehistory of Northwest Coast Indian Art held as part of the Northwest Coast Studies Conference at Simon Fraser University, May 12-16, 1976. A more complete version will be published as part of the volume containing all the contributions to that symposium.

Armatures. Armatures are the structural relationships between symbols. They are the ways of making visual equations. They are the predicates of statements in which symbols are the subjects. They are the inner structures of images. Examples will be shown of armatures which use bilateral symmetry, reciprocal or part-whole relationships, a trinity arrangement, a facial beak-mouth relationship.

Paradigms. Paradigms are the forms in which specific problems get worked out in the art. Each paradigm is related to an artifact type (e.g., spoon paradigms, house-post paradigms), and its meaning has a relationship to a meaning of the artifact. The image, that is to say, is "about" the artifact. Paradigms are repeated solutions to the same problems. The problems are hidden agendas, known to the artists and having to do with the deeper meanings of the art.

Boas (1955:12) once said that it is essential to bear in mind the two-fold source of artistic effect, the one based on form alone, and the other on ideas associated with form, otherwise the theory of art will be one-sided. I think that what Boas meant by "idea associated with form" is what I mean by "meaning." Today thanks to Bill Holm we are in a position where we can describe with great detail and great sensitivity the form of Northwest Coast art. We can describe the ovoids, and the primary, secondary, and tertiary form line structure in a vocabulary designed for us by Bill Holm. However, to describe the form is not to explain the meaning. It seems to me that the description of Northwest Coast art has suffered from the dangers Boas forecast and has become a little bit one-sided, because we can say a lot about form but not very much about meaning. The explanation of the meaning of the art has lagged very much behind the description of the form. Now since I really don't know what meaning is, I think I will let you figure it out from my paper as we go along. I'll leave it with Boas' "idea associated with form."

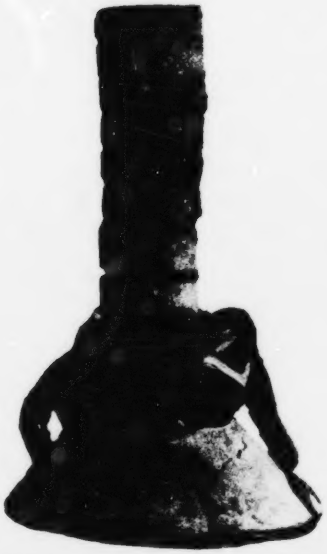


Figure 1. Tsimshian crest helmet with frog. National Museum of Man VII-C-91. Collected by I. W. Powell at Fort Simpson, 1879. National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, photo #20069.

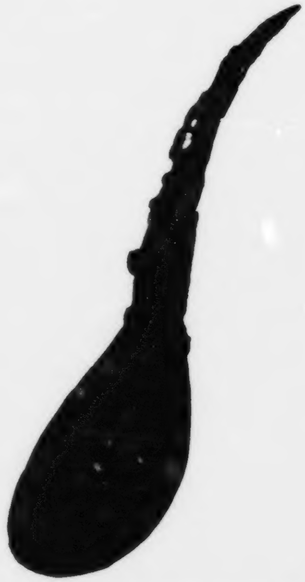


Figure 2. Tsimshian spoon. Handle shows three episodes of the myth of hungry raven. Royal Ontario Museum 6288. Photo courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada.

Figure 3. Crest Helmet, probably Tsimshian. Bear with five human hands. National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada VII-C-1768.

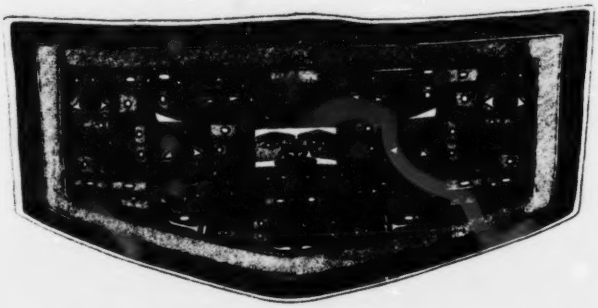


Figure 4. Chilkat Blanket. American Museum of Natural History 16/952. Reproduced from Emmons, 1907, Fig. 567.

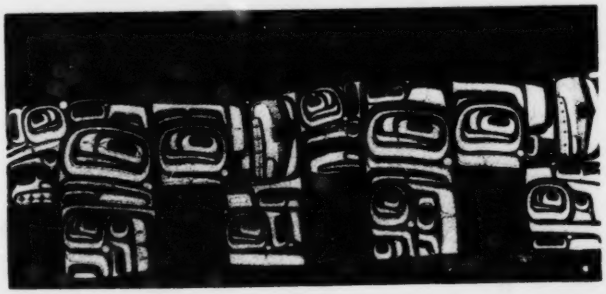


Figure 5. Bill Reid's copy of the design, the "final exam" in northern Northwest Coast art, from the box in the American Museum of Natural History 19/1233. See colour reproduction with this volume.

We do have existing interpretations of meaning of Northwest Coast art, and these take us a long way along the road to understanding it. For example, the Tsimshian crest helmet in figure 1, we can all, having studied Boas, recognize the figure as a frog. This frog figure is a crest referring to a particular social group, and really all that needs to be said about it is that this image of Northwest Coast art represents a crest. In addition quite frequently the images of Northwest Coast art plainly represent episodes from myths as on this spoon handle (Fig. 2) where we seem to have three episodes from the raven mythology of the northern coast, probably the Haida. The figure in the centre, for example, seems to be Raven who has become voraciously hungry, and wanting to eat the bait off the halibut fisherman's hook turns himself into a halibut, gets himself caught, and then when he is cooked he comes out of the halibut again. So some of the images of Northwest Coast art plainly depict episodes from myths, and also some of the images of Northwest Coast art depict spirit figures. They show us what the spirits look like, (otherwise how would we know?) and these are all correct interpretations as far as I am concerned; the trouble is that they don't seem to be sufficient for my purposes.

Now in figure 3 is another crest helmet, which I take to be Tsimshian, and we can say that the animal figure is a bear. But what are those hands doing there? This figure is a bear with five human hands and the hands are very prominent; they are not explained in a story as far as we know or on the crest. I have to tell you one thing about the hands that you can't see; the one at the back has no thumb. That hat has five hands, one of which has no thumb. It seems to me there is an additional agenda going on there which we don't understand and it seems to me that when we are describing the ethnological masterpieces of Northwest Coast art the things that we know intuitively are very important. We have great difficulty in talking about their meaning, and I always refer back to the kind of spectacle which has to do with the Chilcat blanket. Under each illustration of a Chilcat blanket design (Fig. 4) in Emmons' (1907) monograph there is an interpretation by Emmons which says that it depicts a particular thing, perhaps a whale diving. Then there is another interpretation by Boas who steps in as editor and says "No, it represents a bear sitting up on his haunches." Sometimes there is even a third interpretation by Swanton, who is also an expert, giving a third thing that it might depict. Now it doesn't seem to have occurred to anybody at that time that there may have been a different agenda at work, that maybe these designs were dancing to a different tune as well as just trying to represent creatures.

This box illustrated in figure 5 is the "final exam" on northern Northwest Coast art. This is a very famous box, and when we get to the point of being able to say "What is going on in that design?" we will really understand the meaning in Northwest Coast art. The box is in the American Museum of Natural History, and was collected by Emmons way back in the early 80's at Chilcat. Boas studied it, and actually brought pictures of it to show to Charlie Edensaw, who said it represents four episodes of raven, the culture hero. Boas didn't believe him and didn't report it for 30 years afterwards. We have all been intrigued with this box; it's a favourite of Bill Reid, who has copied it in many forms, but we don't know what to say about the design. It doesn't seem to represent a crest, it doesn't seem to represent a myth, and it doesn't seem to represent a spirit. We bring ourselves to believe that it is just empty design, whatever that might be. Some other agenda is at work which we don't yet understand.

Now, that is the problem, it seems that the greater the masterpiece in Northwest Coast art the less we can say about its meaning. What I hope to do is kind of jolt you or pique you a little bit with some new ideas (I think they are new) about ways in which we can look at this art, and suggest other agendas that may be going on in it. Specifically what I plan to do is to try to show that there is a level of symbolism at work deeper than just crest spirit, and also to try to begin to develop a terminology that can get to the sculptural analysis of the images of the art. This is something we are just starting on.

The first thing I want to do (I have to introduce some new terms; afterwards I would be happy if you people would come up with better terms) is define the essential iconographic unit. It isn't a single figure depiction. This tobacco mortar (Fig. 6), probably Haida, is one of my examples of the unit which I am going to call the image. The image is a more complex unit than just a single figure depiction. This image depicts a beaver; it's a beaver face; it does have beaver teeth, although they are not visible in this shot; it has a beaver tail, and it has beaver hind legs. But it also has hands, and they are human hands, and the hands are on backwards, so to speak. It is a complex image which has symbolic content and the content is arranged in a set of relationships which can be called a structure. An image is a system with content and structure which is presumably subject to a structural analysis.

Here is another image (Fig. 7) on the base of a horn spoon. I don't know what it represents, but it seems to be a large bear-like creature associated with a human face; it has four-fingered hands, which are rather strange. I don't know what it is saying. I am calling this type of unit an image and saying that it has content, it has arrange-

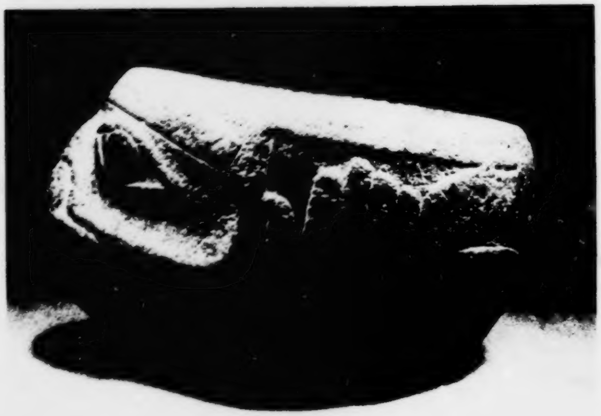


Figure 6. Tobacco mortar, Masset Haida: beaver with human hands. R. E. B. Gore-Langton collection. Hilary Stewart photograph.

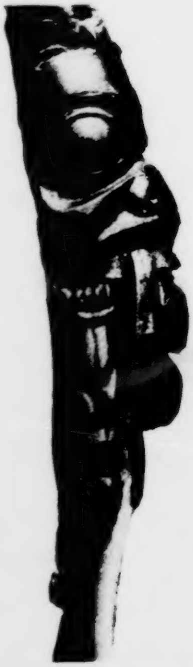


Figure 7. Base of horn spoon with large bear-like creature and human face and four-fingered hands. Mrs. W. H. Cross collection.

ment, it has structure and should therefore be subject to a structural analysis. I think it is probably a statement which has a subject and a predicate.

Now the second thing that I want to do is to try to get at a deeper level of symbolism which is operating in the art. It isn't a case where only one thing is going on at one time. It is operating at different levels at the same time, and one of the deeper levels that I want to get at is the sexual symbolism at work. Now the image in figure 8 is one of the very important ones in my argument; it is the Sechelt image which was one of the key images in *Images Stone B.C.* It is quite large, about 20" high or so, and is not from the northern Northwest Coast. It is from the southern Northwest Coast, from Sechelt, north of Vancouver. One of my assumptions is that some of the roots of Northwest Coast art are in the south. I find intriguing hints in Bill Holm's presentation of this too. This image has been interpreted as a blatantly sexual image and very complex. It is primarily a big powerful male figure with, in the front, a huge phallus. It is a phallic male, but in addition it has a vulva form which is a female symbol. Now I have given a great deal of thought to this punning, to this double meaning that is going on and I am convinced, although not everybody else is, that it is two things at once. It is male, phallic, and it is also a female, mother and child. It is both. Now one of the reasons I want it to be that, is that it solves one of the fundamental problems of sculpture around the world, and that is to depict the human individuum, not the individual, but the individuum, the eternal human. The forms in which we have it in our background are usually mother and child, between mother and male child, but there is some attempt to depict sculpturally either a pair or a triplet which would be, in effect, mother and father and child in the same figure and this is the solution to the problem of the individuum. It is male, mother and child at the same time. Now we don't find this in later Northwest Coast art, and one of the assumptions that I am making is that sexual symbolism was shown more literally in earlier days than it was in recent Northwest Coast art. In fact, in recent Northwest Coast art it is so conspicuous by its absence that we should be suspicious. Sexual characteristics are practically absent completely from recent northern Northwest Coast art.

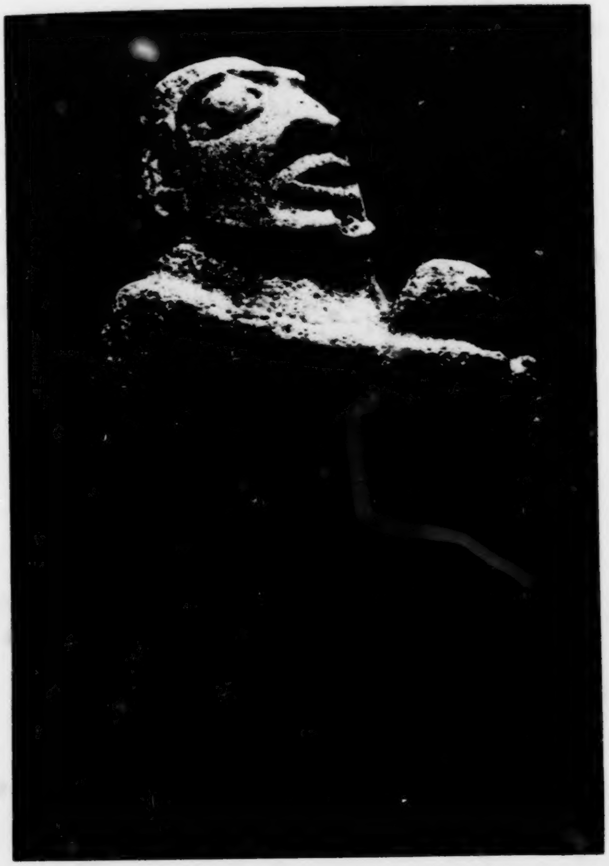


Figure 8. The "Sechelt Image": stone figure found at Sechelt, *ca.* 1921. Vancouver Centennial Museum QAA-2036. Hilary Stewart photograph.

In figure 9 is a human figure on the base of a totem pole at Hazelton. It is generic human; it isn't a portrait of any kind and it has conspicuous absence of any sexual characteristics. Now I think that this generic human in northern Northwest Coast art is another solution to the problem of the individuum where instead of having a figure that has sexual characteristics of all, it has sexual characteristics of none. It is not a portrait, but it is a generic figure; it is in effect half male, half female, half child, half adult. You can see it in many forms on totem poles, and on frontlets, where it is a perfect blend, part male, part female, part child, part adult. The human individuum in the recent northern Northwest Coast solution to that problem begs the question of sex, and leaves it out completely.

Now sexual symbolism is so important in the arts of the world and elsewhere that I feel that its virtual absence on the surface of Northwest Coast art permits us to suspect that we might find it in metaphorical forms below the surface.

We can go back to an earlier stratum. Fortunately, there are a few examples of things that are 15 or 20 centuries old from the northern Northwest Coast, and I refer specifically to the stone clubs from the Hagwilget cache found up the Skeena River near Hazelton in 1898. This is one of the most remarkable archaeological finds in North America; a group of 35 stone batons or clubs were found cached together, and many of them are sculptured. We brought together several of them for the *Images Stone B.C.* show. On a lot of these clubs there are explicit sexual characteristics. Figure 10, for example, is pretty phallic on the handle end. The most remarkable of these clubs in this way is this absolutely amazing piece of stone sculpture shown in figure 11. It is about 15" long and is one of the so-called clubs. I don't know what else to call them, although they were obviously not functional clubs as war clubs. The power was more in the symbol or the image than in the actual utility.

The club in figure 12 is a very remarkable piece of sculpture and still has paint on it. If the handle end is not phallic then my whole argument fails. I read one end as phallic, but now I want to hark back to the idea of the image which is a system. In a sense it is an equation and the other end of the same club is not phallic, but I take it to be the opposite. Now, I invite you when you have time, to contemplate the problem of an artist in depicting the opposite of phallic symbolism. I think it is a problem that could be said to have something to do with the doughnut and the hole, but I'm not quite sure. However, with the vulvic symbolism it seems it is often more necessary to resort to metaphor, and I take the opposite end of figure 12 to be a mouth which doesn't have to be the mouth of any particular thing; it is just a mouth; it is a toothed mouth; it is a very elaborately toothed mouth. I take it to be a vulvic symbol. So I take this club to be kind of an equation, an image, a very carefully worked out image, a very powerful image, which is phallic on the one end and vulvic on the other, a phallic-vulvic image.

I am going to take you on a bit of an adventure here. Take this phallic-vulvic image with the phallic end up and

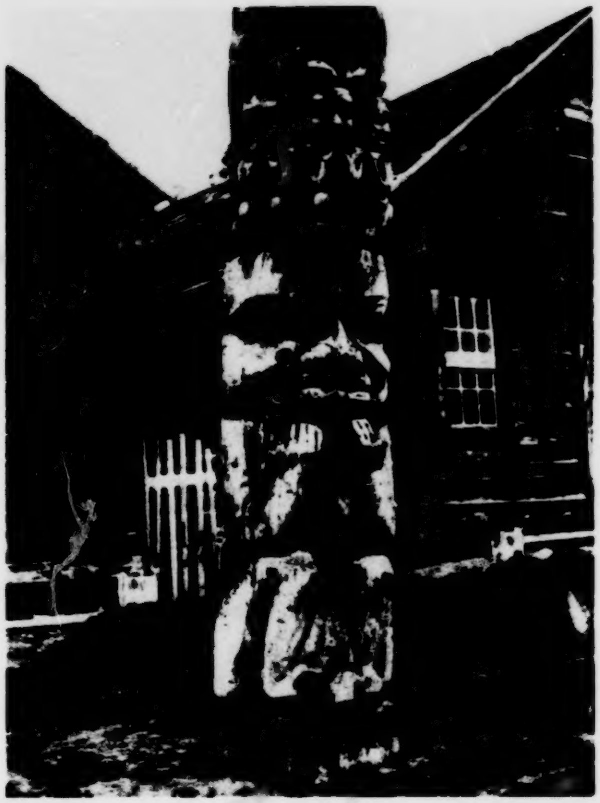


Figure 9. Sexless human on base of totem pole at Hazelton. British Columbia Provincial Museum photograph PN 8587.

Figure 10. Stone club from Hagwilget. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation 5/5058. Hilary Stewart photograph.

Figure 11. Stone club from Hagwilget. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation 5/5057. Hilary Stewart photograph.

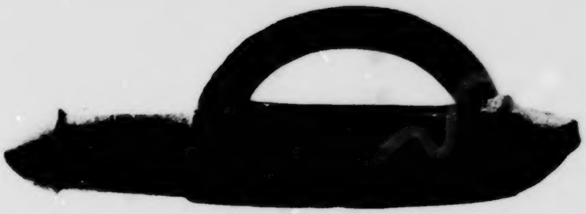


Figure 12. Stone club from Hagwilget. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation 5/5059. Hilary Stewart photograph.

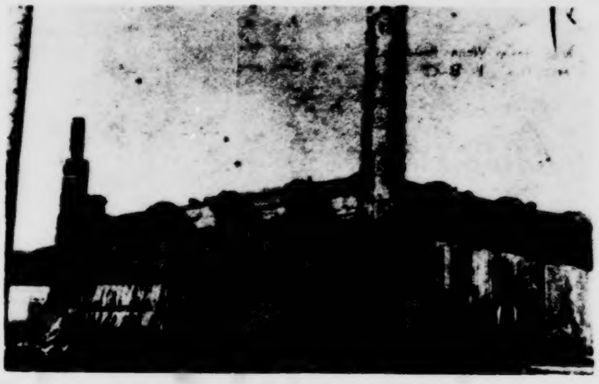


Figure 13. Frontal pole of Chief Wiha's house at Masset, *ca.* 1887-1889. British Columbia Provincial Museum photograph PN 5339.

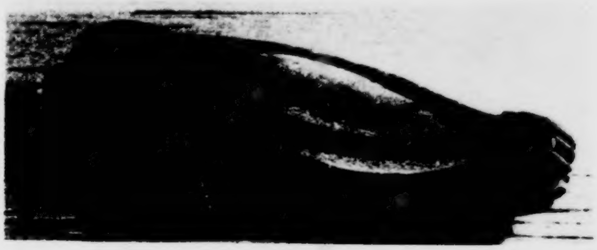


Figure 14. Stone seal bowl from the Fraser Canyon. Vancouver Centennial Museum QAA-1039. Hilary Stewart photograph.

subject it to a metaphorical transformation keeping the same underlying image, changing the scale and changing the metaphor, and you get something like this. The frontal pole, in figure 13 is one of the largest on the Northwest Coast, and was in front of Chief Wiha's house at Masset. It's an image, the whole thing, and on the top is a big expandible hat which is another metaphorical way of saying it, I guess, and on the bottom is a huge mouthed creature, and basically the underlying image I take to be a phallic-vulvic woman. Now we have always suspected that there might have been something phallic in totem pole imagery. A little bit of confirmation in the idea of the phallic-vulvic image in these older Haida totem poles which have an oval door opening at the base, is given by Jimmy Deans, a Scotsman who got to the Queen Charlotte Islands before the missionaries and wasn't as inhibited as they. He did record that the oval entrance at the base of the totem pole was considered to be the female generative organ, so it is a vulvic image. I invite you to look at the bear, just above it, with the upside down human figure. We are going to come back to that.

Now, if there is phallic symbolism and images based on it, it would be male chauvinism to suggest that there isn't the opposite. Looking for vulvic symbolism, I take as my type specimen, this little ancient, archaic stone vessel (Fig. 14) from the Fraser Canyon near Yale. This is another case where the more explicit imagery is older and southern. This is a little seal figure and the vessel has that distinctive, what I call vulvic, form. If this isn't a vulvic image, then my argument about vulvic imagery fails. Now, seal and vulva as a metaphor persists on the Northwest Coast, farther north, in the seal grease dishes. Many of them have as their vessel that vulvic form shape. It is another case of the persistence of an image in a different medium.

The seated human figure bowl in figure 15 comes from the Fraser River near Lillooet. We don't really know its age, something like fifteen centuries. I was very interested to note Bill Holm's comment on the similarities between the style of such bowls and northern Northwest Coast style, because I see that too. I see these as Northwest Coast sculpture despite the fact that they are inland and quite far south. Now how to interpret this, what do they mean? It is a human figure, and humans can be either male or female; there is nothing at all on these to suggest that they are male. They have a vessel in the belly or in the lap or between the legs or however you want to put it, and they seem to have been used for female puberty rituals. So one could suggest that it is a female figure that is represented, and that the vessel is the female vessel, and that the vessel and the figure are of the same size. In other words the part is the same size as the whole. I am going to be saying a few enigmatic things like that, and doing it purposely, because I think the language of imagery of the Northwest Coast does use some of the figures of speech of that kind, the part and the whole being the same thing. This is a rhetorical figure called synecdoche where the part represents the whole. The part and the whole are the same female figure with sexual meanings, perhaps.

Now I want to show you an example of what might be the persistence of an image through time and in a different medium. Figure 16 is one of the seated human figure bowls from Lytton. This bowl has a very Northwest Coast face, and down on the front of the vessel here with the head down is a creature that might be called a frog or a toad. It is a human figure bowl with a frog on the front of the vessel. Now come 1500 years later in time and 500 miles farther north in space and we find figure 17 on the northern Queen Charlotte Islands, which I call the Edenshaw tobacco mortar. It is essentially, when you look at it this way, a seated human figure bowl with a creature on the front which might be considered to be the frog. It is in fact a seated human figure bowl with a frog on the front. I think it is even more complex than that. I think it is a seated human figure bowl, a seal dish, and a bowl with a frog on the front all at the same time.

Now what about the logic? The frog or whatever that creature is on the front has become much larger; the part has become greater than the whole. That frog or whatever that mouthed creature is, is large enough so that its mouth could swallow the entire mortar of which it is a part; the part *has* become greater than the whole.

Now in figure 18 is a little wooden dish, which turns out to be a seated human figure bowl as well with a human figure with arms and hands around the rim of the vessel. It has a seated human figure bowl with the vessel as the bowl but the vessel is bigger than the whole now, and the part is greater than the whole. That progression up the coast seems to hold, and here an equation is made so that the seated human figure bowl is also a raven, so that the female part of it is in the back of the raven. The raven symbol, I read as being phallic on the front with the beak, and vulvic in the back. Putting a couple of these together you can see the close similarities between that kind of bowl and the raven rattle.

So much for phallic and vulvic symbolism. What about the symbolism of the sexual act itself? Unlike the arts of other parts of the world, the act of sexual intercourse is never depicted on the Northwest Coast, and here again is what I think the archaeologists would call a significant absence. When you never see it, it is probably evidence that it is tabooed and repressed, but we might still look for it in disguise or in metaphorical forms. The only place

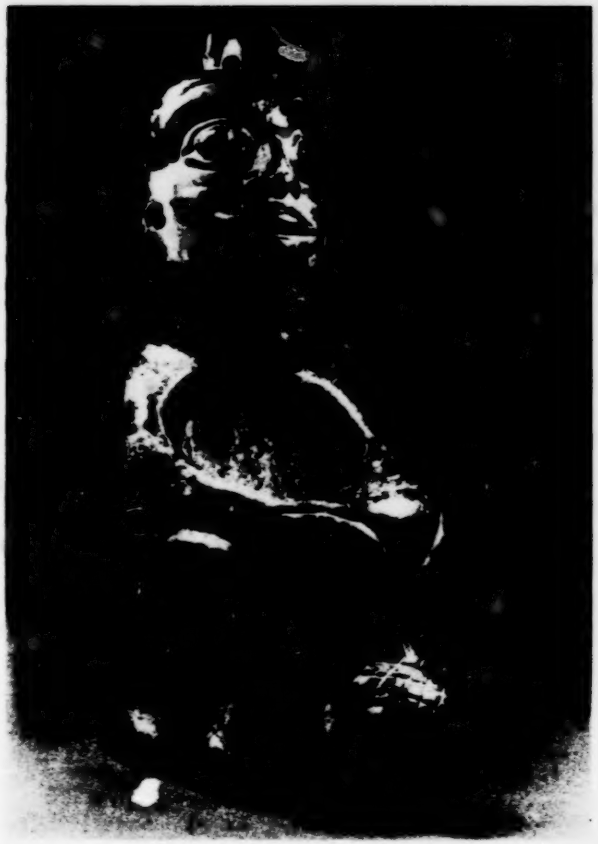


Figure 15. Seated human figure bowl, Lillooet. Vancouver Centennial Museum QAD-1692. Hilary Stewart photograph.

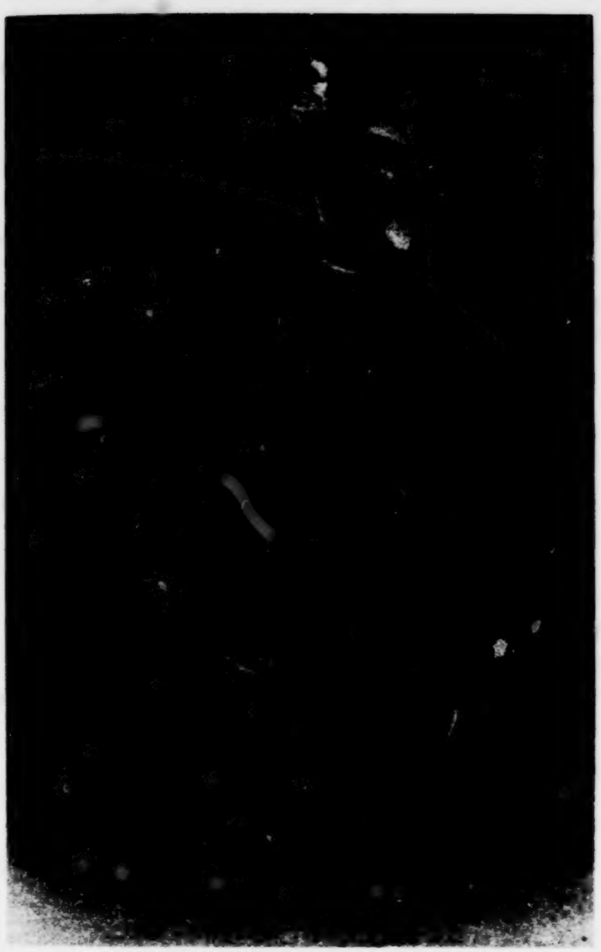


Figure 16. Seated human figure bowl, Lytton. British Columbia Provincial Museum EbRj 22:1. Hilary Stewart photograph.

Figure 17. "Edenshaw" tobacco mortar, Haida from Kiusta. McCord Museum, McGill University 12052. Hilary Stewart photograph.

Figure 18. Wooden dish, human figure with arms and hands around the rim and with backbone and legs. Smithsonian Institution 178961.

Figure 19. Argillite panel illustrating bear mother myth and showing sexual activity between bear and human wife. (Specimen and photographer not identified.)

where sexual activity occurs explicitly in Northwest Coast art, is on Haida argillite panels showing the bear mother myth and the sexual activity that takes place between the bear husband and his *human* wife. Marius Barbeau (1957) discovered this sexual activity on the bear mother panels and described it with some great surprise. Haida myths define a great variety of sexual activity, but Barbeau characteristically finds that this sort of thing couldn't have been at home on the Northwest Coast, and he would bring it from the Orient or across the Pacific. It is another one of Barbeau's importations. There is sexual activity in these panels between the bear husband and the *human* wife, that seemed to interest the carvers of these panels (and the carver of many of them may have been Charlie Edenshaw). They wanted to depict that particular episode of the myth. In figure 19 is one of them (they are not all the great masterpieces of Northwest Coast art) which shows the inter-acting metaphorically as bears or as a bear and a human, and on the right hand side there is an interaction between the bear and the human which has a detail which is of interest to me, and that is the joining of tongues of the human creature and the bear. In the 1830s or so the Haida panel pipes developed one form where there is a great deal of activity with tongues and joining of tongues. We don't know what to say about the meaning of the panel pipes either, but here, as of the 1830s, a great deal of play was joined tongues, maybe metaphoric or something. On some of the panel pipes of this kind, some of the activities (if you look at them with the eye of a dirty old man) can be seen as pretty sexual. If you will just contemplate the poses of this group in figure 20, and forget that they are metaphorical beasties in term with the humans, you've got something that is pretty explicitly sexual going on, or at least that is the way I see it. There is sexual fun going on with the joined tongues on these 1830 panel pipes. Now where does it come from? It does hark back I think to an earlier source, and I think it is this source: the joined tongues that form such an important feature of the thing on the back of the raven rattle.

Now, this human reclining figure on the back of the raven rattle (Fig. 21) is one of the most daring pieces of Northwest Coast art. There is only one purpose, I think, for which a human being will assume that particular posture. Here we have a situation where a human figure (sometimes this is called a man, but that is male chauvinism; it could just as well be called a woman) is in that particular posture, which is a sexual posture, but the thing that is going on is not literal but metaphoric. This it seems to me is an act of sex which is shown half literally and half metaphorically, and in the crazy logic of Northwest Coast imagery, that fits perfectly.

Figure 20. Haida argillite panel pipe with joined tongues and much interlocking. Museum of Mankind (British Museum) De 5. Peter Macnair photograph.

Figure 21. Detail of raven rattle with human figure in reclining sexual pose. Photo couresy of The American Museum of Natural History 16-288.

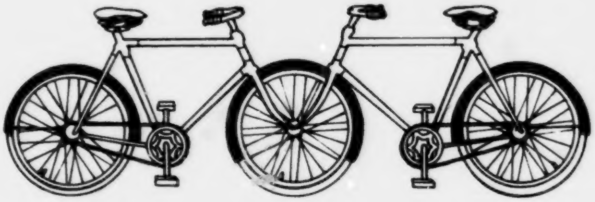


Figure 22. Bicycles (double images on a bilateral armature). Redrawn by Nancy Condrashoff (original concept and publication not identified).

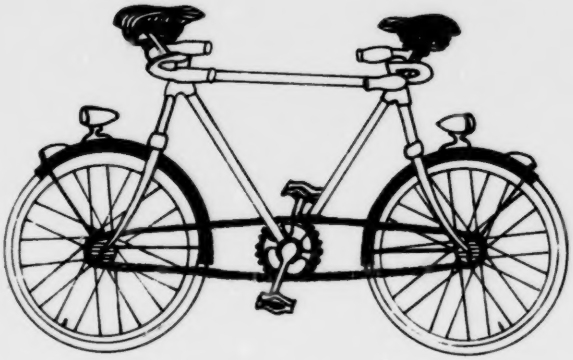


Figure 23. Bicycle going both ways (condensed double image on a bilateral armature). Redrawn by Nancy Condrashoff. (Original concept and publication not identified.)

Figure 24. Haida chest with double image on a bilateral armature (big creature with four eyes). Dr. Bruce Ruddick collection.

Figure 25. Tsimshian charm with mouthed creature at each end. British Columbia Provincial Museum 1596. British Columbia Provincial Museum photograph.

I've talked a little bit about the problem of structural analysis of images. An image is something that has content, but it also has structure. I have been trying to get at ways you can get at the inner structure of images because I think that half of the meaning is in the content and half of the meaning is in the structure. That is why the subtitle of my paper is "The World is as Sharp as a Knife." This is a Haida proverb in which half of the meaning is in what it says and half of the meaning is in what it is. It is an aphorism which seems to contradict itself. It is the exact counterpart of a Haida image, I think, in art.

Now, the term I have borrowed to describe the inner structure of images is armature and armature is a term that Lévi-Strauss (1969:199) has used for the inner structure of myths and so I have borrowed it for the inner structure of art and I think I can see several different kinds of armatures in Northwest Coast images. One of the most common, of course, on the Northwest Coast, is the bilateral armature. The two big bicycles in figure 22 are described as double images on a bilateral armature. There is something that happens to images that you have to mention right away, and that is that they become condensed; they become refined down to a more tightly compact form. The bicycle in figure 23 is a condensed double image on a bilateral armature. So much for that armature. There are several places to find it in Northwest Coast art. One of the places I think it is most important is on these Haida chests (Fig. 24) where that big creature with the four eyes is in effect a double face. I think what we have is a double image on a bilateral armature and that, that is part of the meaning. Obviously I don't know all of the meaning but I think that is part of it. Now, bilateral armature occurs in all sorts of things. This little Tsimshian charm (Fig. 25) is almost nothing else than a bilateral armature. It is bilaterally symmetrical, as we would say, and each end is a mouthed creature, a generic mouthed creature. The iconographic content isn't very much at all but it is expressing that relationship of bilateral symmetry. That is part of the meaning.

Now those of you who are archaeologists will perhaps understand my great excitement, discovering this little "whatsit" in figure 26. This is a little stone piece, less than two inches long, from an archaeological site on the southern coast in the Gulf Islands. We don't know what to call it, so we call it a "whatsit." It is the most marvelous little piece of abstract stone sculpture that one could want to see; it also feels very nice; it's smooth; it could be a touching stone but iconographically what it is, is a pure armature. It has no iconographic content at all. It is a pure expression of relationships, a piece of sculpture reduced down to pure relationships, pure and simple; it is a marvelous little thing.

Now here is another thing (Fig. 27) which seems to be on a bilateral armature, but actually it is on a slightly different armature which I call the triadic armature. This northern soul catcher is a thing which has two symmetrical mouths, one at either end. You don't really have to say what those mouths are. I don't think that in this classic form they are meant to be a bear or this or that or anything. It is just a big toothed mouth, perhaps conceptually the biggest toothed mouth you can think of. But there is a third element in the middle, a human element, and it illustrates the relationship of a triad. A triad is a pair of opposite things with a third thing which mediates them. It is one of the forms of human contemplation that is basic, and I think what the soul catcher is, is a triadic armature with very little iconographic content on it. Now a triadic armature pure and simple is the copper, which has two opposite things which are bilaterally symmetrical with a third thing that mediates them (Fig. 28). It doesn't have, usually, or I think ideally, any iconographic content at all. I think a copper should be plain, although it is also taken as a torso and a face is put on the top. I think a copper should be plain, but I think by approaching the copper from this direction we are getting at its essential meaning. It is essentially an expression of relationships.

Now there is another kind of armature which I find quite difficult to illustrate, but a drawing of hands (Fig. 29) gets at it. It is what I call a reciprocal armature. One way of putting what is going on here is that a hand is a hand's way of creating another hand. I would sooner have had something like a chicken is an egg's way of creating another egg, where the two parts are different and have the relationship of part and whole.

On the base of this Haida horn spoon (Fig. 30) is this image often called a bear eating man. This face is read as a bear and the little upside down human figure is called a man. Turn it on its side so that you can see the bear and human figure more closely. Ignore the wings, there is something else going on there, and ignore the joined tongues, there is probably something else going on there, and see that the human figure and the bear are each other. They are parts of each other, and they are coterminous with each other, and this relationship I call the double twist. It is a part/whole relationship where the part is greater than the whole. The part is the bear and it is metaphoric, the whole is the human and it is literal, and that combination of literal/metaphoric, part/whole with the part being greater than the whole is a type of image you find on the Northwest Coast as that bear eating man.

On this entrance pole (Fig. 31) we again see the bear at the base of the pole metaphorically restating the meaning

Figure 26. Soapstone "whatsit" from the Gulf Islands. Mrs. W. H. Cross collection. Hilary Stewart photograph.

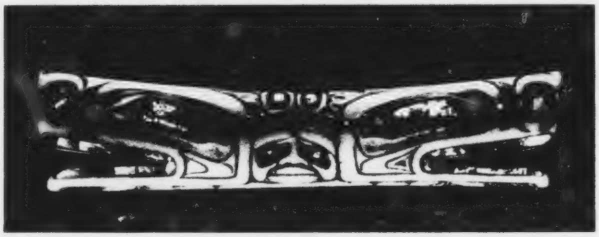


Figure 27. Tsimshian soul catcher from the Nass River. British Columbia Provincial Museum 9619. British Columbia Provincial Museum photograph.

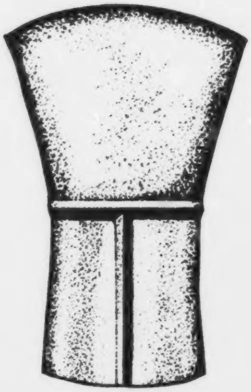


Figure 28. A Copper. Drawing by Nancy Condrashoff.

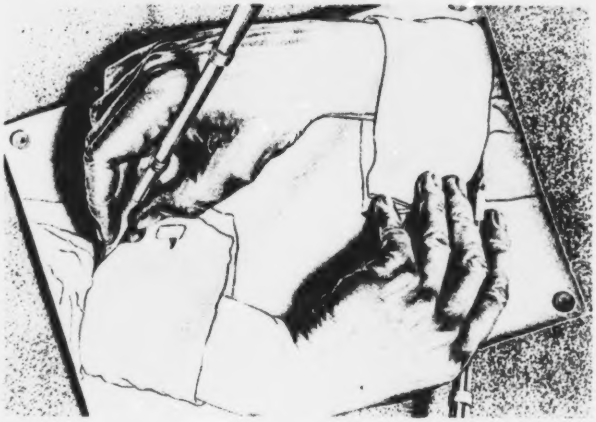


Figure 29. M. C. Escher drawing of hands.

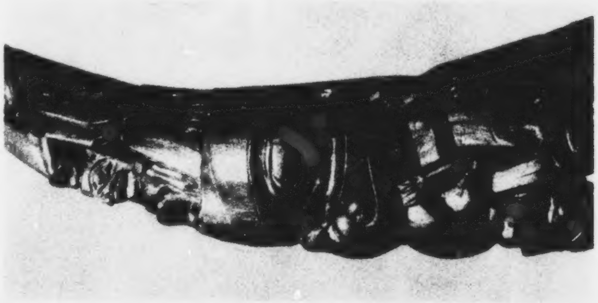


Figure 30. Detail of horn spoon: bear eating man. National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada VII-B-498. Wilson Duff photograph (slide 440).

of this oval entry and the little upside down human figure, a literal human figure with a metaphoric part which thereby becomes the vulvic symbol. So in addition to being a crest, if that is what that bear is, I read this bear eating man figure as a vulvic symbol on the base of the pole. You find it not only on poles, but on things like this mortuary (Fig. 32), a Haida mortuary with the little human part almost invisible, but the whole is smaller than the part; the whole is literal; the part is metaphoric and the whole thing is a vulvic symbol. Here we have this bear vulvic symbol as a tomb, and if you think that the clang relationship in our own language between womb and tomb is accidental I think you are wrong. This is a womb/tomb in the Haida, and has a much deeper meaning than just a symbol.

Now in concluding I would like to mention just a little bit about how these things get worked out in the art. Each image is the solution of a problem; there are a series of problems and these have to do with different artifact types. Now the word we have chosen for these series of problems solved is the word paradigm. What I have here is a hammer paradigm. We talk these days about house post paradigms, mask paradigms, panel pipe paradigms and so on. I want to give you an idea by tracing the outline of the hammer or hand maul because it is really a hammer pestle, Northwest Coast paradigm, which I worked out in more detail in *Images Stone B.C.* (Duff, 1975). The basic type is this beautifully sculptured and beautifully efficient implement (Fig. 33). There is nothing wrong with these things as tools even though they are also sculptural forms, and it seems to be many, many centuries old along the Northwest Coast. I see it as the basis of a conceptual evolution or paradigm of hammer types which proceeded from it.

Something went on with the armature of the hand hammers. Somebody turned the handle at right angles and created a thing that was the same at both ends, creating an image on a triadic armature. He made it also, at the same time a more effective or at least a more comfortable implement that handles absolutely beautifully (Fig. 34). It hugs your hand as your hand hugs it. There is nothing wrong with the thing as an artifact. It is just that it is also an image, a sculptural image on an armature. Conceptually, the next step was the stirrup maul where the two sides are the same but it encloses the hand and you have an image where in effect the grasper is grasped (Fig. 35). Your hand that grasps the hammer is also grasped by the hammer. Then there was play on that armature, where instead of being exactly at right angles, this took on a slight slope and there was some play with the bilateral symmetry of the two sides. The fully evolved maul comes out looking like something that's eating

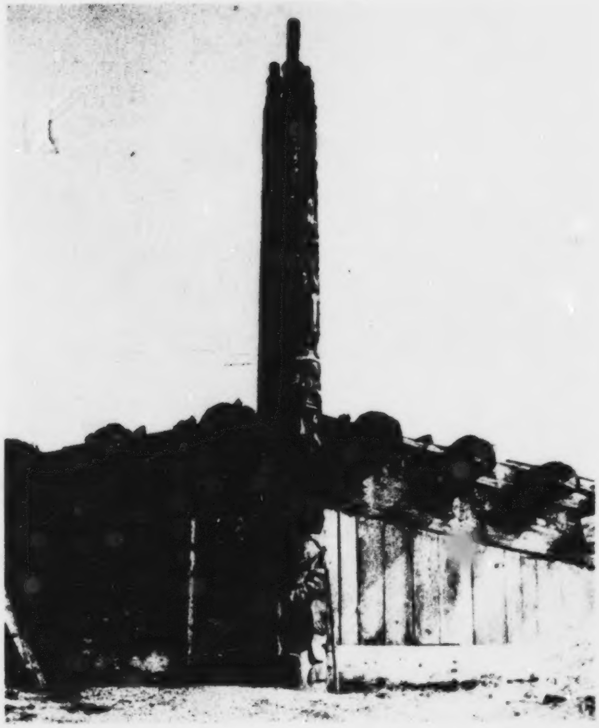


Figure 31. Edenshaw's house, Masset. Entrance pole with bear eating man. Maynard photograph, 1884: British Columbia Provincial Museum PN 5545.

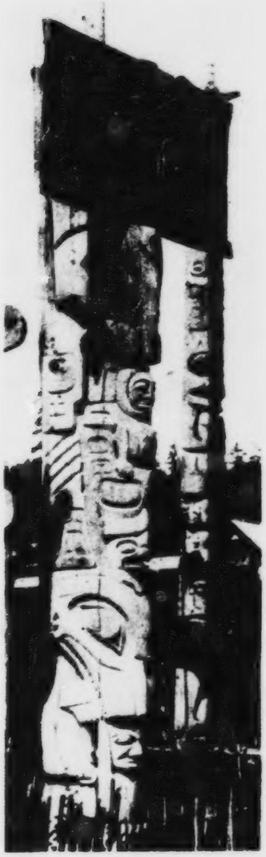
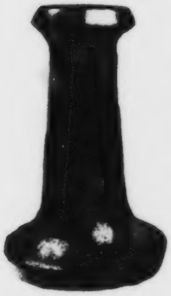


Figure 32.
Grave post at Skidegate.
Maynard photograph, 1884?
British Columbia
Provincial Museum PN 1045.



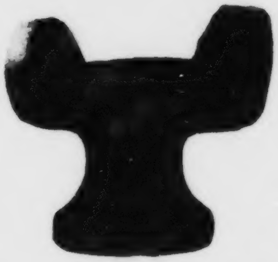
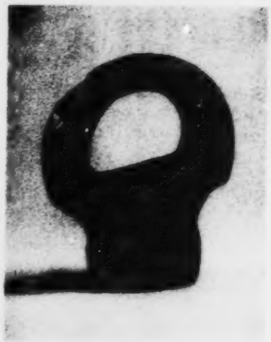


Figure 33. Hand maul. University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology A1646. Hilary Stewart photograph.

Figure 34. Haida T-shaped hand maul, Masset. British Columbia Provincial Museum GaUab-y:13. Hilary Stewart photograph.



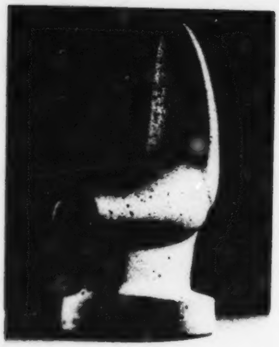


Figure 35. Stirrup maul from Alaska. Smithsonian Institution 23417. Hilary Stewart photograph.

Figure 36. Tlingit slope-handled maul. Mrs. Dolly Jensen, courtesy of the Tongass Historical Society Museum, Ketchikan, Alaska. Hilary Stewart photograph.

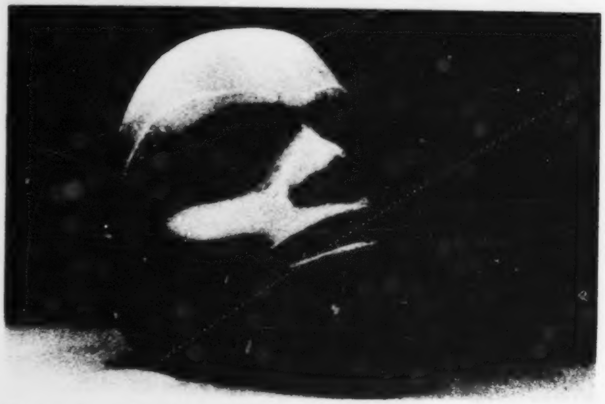


Figure 37. Closed-eyes stone mask from Kitkatla. National Museum of Man VII-C-329. Hilary Stewart photograph.

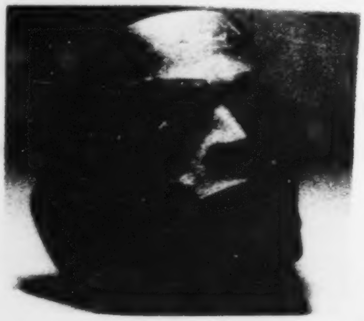


Figure 38. Open-eyes stone mask from Metlakatla (or Nass River). Musée de l'Homme 81.22.1. Hilary Stewart photograph.

itself. You will notice that as this process goes along that there is more and more care with the sculpture. They become clothed in beauty which is a characteristic of art as well. They culminate in the slope handled pestle or maul. It can be used as a pestle or a hammer; the handle is turned at 45 degrees which is half way between upright and at right angles, and I think that is part of the meaning as well (Fig. 36). Now you don't have to see sexual imagery, you don't have to see that as an image that is phallic above and vulvic below if you don't want to, but for me now, that is part of the meaning, and it adds a great deal to the meaning of the sculpture.

Now, there are other paradigms to be worked out: panel pipes, headdress frontlets, masks (one of my colleagues, Marjorie Halpin, is working on a mask paradigm) (*see* this volume p. 269).

Of all the Northwest Coast masks the one in figure 37 has to be the epitome. This stone mask from the National Museum in Ottawa was the key image of *Images Stone B.C.* It is an absolutely marvelous artifact slightly larger than life-size, a beautifully modelled, beautifully smoothed, human face, a mask, with these strange eyes, which, being stone, have never opened. It is half of one of the great, great masterpieces of Northwest Coast art because in the Musée de l'Homme is its partner with the same face, the same size except a little bit smaller in the front, and having perfectly round circle eyes which, being stone, can never close (Fig. 38). When we get to these masterpieces we are usually left speechless about their meaning, but the point I want to make is that the meanings are very deep, deeper than just depictions of a crest, a spirit, or an episode from a myth, and they are not just decorative. In masterpieces like this there is deep meaning at all levels. There is meaning in the artifact and the artifact is part of the meaning. This is a mask which has to do with human identity, and in this case there is meaning in the material, which is of stone. The eyes of the one in the front can never open and the eyes in the one in the back can never close. There is meaning in the armature, and I think the armature of this composite image is a triadic armature, because there are two opposite things in the masks and an implied third thing, the human face of the person that would wear those masks which would mediate them both. There is some kind of meaning there. I am sure there is meaning at every level. There is meaning in the symbols which come from the body self, from the eyes which have to do with seeing and recognizing. These are deep meanings.

In conclusion I would just like to say that I think that the explanation of meaning of Northwest Coast art has lagged behind the explanation of form, and that there are deeper meanings, deep symbolic meanings, many of them having to do with the human body self—of which some show sexual symbolism. The image as I have defined it might be taken as a unit for structural analysis, and some of these images have a life and a prehistory of their own and great time depth. Northwest Coast images have deep meanings, deep structures, and some of them, deep time depth.

References

Barbeau, Marius

1957 *Haida Myths Illustrated in Argillite Carvings.* National Museum of Canada Bulletin No. 139, Anthropological Series No. 38, Ottawa.

Boas, Franz

1955 *Primitive Art.* Dover Publications, New York.

Duff, Wilson

1975 *Images Stone B.C.* Hancock House, Saanichton.

Emmons, George T.

1907 *The Chilkat Blanket.* Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. III, Part IV, New York.

Gunther, Erna

1966 *Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians.* Superior Publishing Co., Seattle.

Haeberlin, Hermann K.

1918 "Principles of Esthetic Form in the Art of the North Pacific Coast," *American Anthropologist,* N.S. Vol. XX, pp. 258-64.

Holm, Bill

1965 *Northwest Coast Indian Art. An Analysis of Form.* University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Holm, Bill and William Reid

1975 *Form and Freedom. A Dialogue on Northwest Coast Indian Art.* Institute for the Arts, Rice University, Houston.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1969 *The Raw and the Cooked.* Introduction to a Scence of Mythology: I. Translated from the French by John and Doreen Weightman. Harper and Row, New York.

Panofsky, Erwin

1939 *Studies in Iconology.* Oxford University Press, New York.

Wingert, Paul

1951 "Tsimshian Sculpture," *The Tsimshian: Their Arts and Music.* Vol. XVIII, Publications of the Amercan Ethnological Society. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Cosmic Equations in Northwest Coast Indian Art

George F. MacDonald
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MAN

For Wilson Duff, the arts of the Northwest Coast Indians reflected profound cultural equations that implied a great time depth for their development. Even before archaeologists working in the area reported radio-carbon dates that pushed the beginning of the art tradition of the coast back more than 3,000 years, Wilson's studies of prehistoric stone art (Duff, 1956a, 1956b, 1963) had indicated that dates of this order were to be expected.

Wilson was always anxious to know of any new archaeological finds that I or other archaeologists had made on the coast, particularly of decorated pieces with some temporal affiliation that would add to his perspective of historical development in Northwest Coast art. The long discussions between us that followed each new find introduced me to his constant quest for hidden equations and metaphors in Northwest Coast art. Our mutual excitment over the collections of historical photographs of village scenes that I was assembling for the Haida village mapping project of the National Museum of Man, provided the basis for a deeper dialogue between us, particularly in terms of Haida art and culture.

He was intrigued by the structualist approach to questions of social organization and mythological analysis, in that it confirmed his own conclusions about the consumate logic inherent in various Northwest Coast cultural forms, as witnessed in the following quote from *Images Stone B.C.* (Duff, 1975:157):

> **Myth, like art, seems to have as its hidden agenda the problem of coming to terms with the terrible dilemmas of the human condition. As Professor Lévi-Strauss has taught us, the provisional answers lie in the logic implicit in the resolution of the myths.**

And yet the central problems which fascinated Wilson were those of meaning and communication in a visual sense. In viewing Northwest Coast art as the product of an ancient and profound philosophical system, related to those of northeast Asia, he felt such questions were possibly more amenable to Eastern meditative approaches than to Western analytical ones. The latter were not invalid, but simply could not penetrate deeply enough into the human condition. I am sure that if Wilson had a personal mantra for such meditation, it was the sound "Edenshaw." The mandala that sustained his attention was certainly the copper. What he called "pure forms," pieces of material culture free of any functional encumbrances are quite frequent in Northwest Coast art, but the most enigmatic of all, and that which Wilson considered to be the key was the copper. Since many of our discussions focussed on the copper I would like to recall some of those thoughts and to pursue the equation a little farther in this tribute to Wilson Duff.

The Background to the Problem

Attention has recently been focussed by Lévi-Strauss (1975a) on a set of symbolic forms that have long intrigued students of Northwest Coast art, the trails of which emanate from the Swaihwe mask of the Salish tribes of the southern coast. By a series of transformations Swaihwe is linked to two Kwakiutl masks, the Xwexwe mask in terms of form and the Tsonoqua mask in terms of function. Finally, the trail leads to the coppers of the north coast tribes. He points out in his review of the previous literature concerning the Swaihwe mask (Lévi-Strauss, 1975b:77) Wilson Duff (1972) interprets the traditional native accounts to mean that the Swaihwe mask was a relatively late eighteenth-century creation, inspired by a dream experienced by a historically known individual. To this Lévi-Strauss takes exception, pointing out the similarities of the long tongue and prominent eyes as well as the ear transformations of the Swaihwe to wooden tomb figures from the Late Chou period of China (III-IV Century B.C.) as had Badner in an earlier study (1966). Lévi-Strauss sees no close connection between the two but feels that the similarity indicates the ancient and widespread nature of this complex symbolic form, and particularly of the mythological heritage that underlies it.

In the first installment of his study of the problem, *La Voie des Masques* I & II (1975a) Lévi-Strauss limits himself to establishing the parallels for the Swaihwe-Xwexwe-Tsonoqua mask complex of the southern and central coast to coppers only on the north coast, and does not deal extensively with mythological or representational parallels. In a recent study, however, *Les Dessous d'un Masque* (Lévi-Strauss, 1977) he focusses attention on the myths of the Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit that concern water monsters and their relationships to wealth. In essence, he suggests that, like the Swaihwe and Xwexwe masks, those of Hakulak among the Tsimshian, Qonoqada for the Haida, and Gonakadet for the Tlingit, symbolize the heads of water monsters which are used in connection with puberty rites and marriage ceremonies as reminders of marriage proscriptions, with particular reference to marriage taboos between brothers and sisters. These water monsters have their counterparts in land and sky creatures, all of whom create natural tremors such as earthquakes, whirlpools, violent storms, etc. when angered by breaches of marriage restrictions. On the contrary, they promise rewards of riches to those who contract properly sanctioned (exogamous) marriages.

With these associations in mind between certain mask forms along the coast, with water creatures who are masters of wealth, related to catastrophic events of nature, marriage laws and finally to coppers themselves, I would like to take a considerably different route to many of these same concepts that lie at the core of Northwest Coast art forms and yet remain so enigmatic.

Shamanic Cosmology on the Northwest Coast

To pursue this new line of enquiry we must turn to the essential question of the cosmological framework of Northwest Coast Indian cultures. The intent is to examine the principles of the universe that allow for transformations of man and beast, certain concepts of time and space that form such a prominent feature of the arts of the Northwest Coast. I feel it is particualrly important to examine the institution of shamanism and some of the fundamental, shared concepts of shamanic cosmology that are becoming apparent throughout the New World, with roots into Siberia as well, through the works of Eliade (1972), Furst (1972), Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971, 1975) and many others.

Their work indicates a conceptual framework, linking cultures across a wide area, that has been scarcely studied in the past, but which provides the basis for cultures to influence each other in covert, often secret, exchanges between ritual specialists. Such networks, as well as the information and logic in which they deal, are secretive. It is little wonder that early ethnographers were either scarcely aware of its existence or they despaired of ever becoming privy to the secrets it harboured. One only has to look at the pitifully small amount of information that exists on shamanism or on cosmology for the Haida for example to realize how deficient the anthropological record is in this area.

In terms of Northwest Coast studies it is significant that Boas (1902:2) felt obliged to comment on the ethnological significance of what he called "esoteric doctrines".

> It is, therefore, evident that we must not, in our study of Indian life, seek for the highest form of thought only, which is held by the priest, the chief, the leader. Interesting and attractive as this field of research may be, it is supplementary only to the study of the thoughts, emotional life, and ethical standards of the common people, whose interests center in other fields of thought and of whom the select class forms only a special type.

This type of thinking, from the leading scholar in Northwest Coast studies, undoubtedly discouraged studies of shamanism and cosmology throughout the area. Nevertheless, there is some hope that the vast accumulation of mythological material collected by Boas and others may still yield insights into such questions as Lévi-Strauss and others have recently demonstrated.

The importance of understanding this framework of shamanic exchanges, set against a framework of shared cosmology, is basic in dealing with many perplexing problems in the study of both archaeological and ethnographical material culture of the coast. In many areas of North America, for example, the shaman, as an initiate, was often received as a guest by tribes who, under other circumstances, would have been hostile to him. Some accounts describe initiates ranging over great distances, and through many different cultures, in their quest for spiritual power. The rapid spread of Christian elements throughout the tribes of North America undoubtedly took place through the shamanic network.

Shamans were ritual specialists in societies which had few such specialist roles. Shamans traded and exchanged their esoteric knowledge with each other. In Siberia there were even shaman fairs, analogous to the Siberian fur fairs, where shamans would congregate from variou tribes to exchange techniques, tricks, materia medica and, no doubt, motifs of music and legend. As a institution, shamanism differs from cults, priesthoods membership in secret societies, etc. by stressing innovation in its techniques and performances. Shamanism developed among early hunting and gathering societie where the main economic role of the practitioner was t find game for the group to hunt, a task which often required innovative approaches.

A delightful example of the shaman's receptivity to new techniques is provided by an account in the Barbeau files in the National Museum of Man in which he explains to an administrative officer at the Museum that he traded a Museum wire recording device, one of the first available to a shaman on the Nass River, who would not otherwise have parted with his magical songs that Barbeau wanted for the museum files. It was obvious the shaman recognized the special effects he could achieve with this new technology. I would even suggest that in the prehistoric past shamans were the only members of a group that could borrow new technology from neighbours as only they could integrate it with the cosmological structure of the recipients. Most of this process of structural integration took place on a subconscious level in the mind of the shaman and found acceptance among his group in terms of his revealed dreams.

One of the things shamans held in common which facilitated exchange between them was a cosmic model in which the principles of the universe were explained in a type of cosmic equation. Recent research in the New World into different tribal cosmologies finds that, although there are many variations, there are also large areas of commonly held principles. In fact Eliade (1972) has described the basic model and many of its variations from Siberia to South America, in which shamans of the Northwest Coast are shown to occupy an intermediate position in terms of techniques and concepts as well as of geography. Ridingtons' examination of the axial cosmology of shamanism, based on data from the Beaver Indians, (Ridington and Ridington, 1970) is generally applicable to hunting peoples throughout large areas of Siberia and the New World.

I propose now to review some of the fundamental concepts of shamanic cosmology. The major problem will be to focus on common features and to avoid the points at which a great deal of variation occurs between different groups. To begin with, the shamanic cosmic model is axial. That is, the horizontal axes of the world are determined by facing the rising sun in the east. West is then at the back, and right and left arms extended point to south and north. The firmament above is conceived of as a house structure, a skin tent in some areas, a plank house on the Northwest Coast. The smoke hole through which the vertical axis of the universe passes is thought to be directly overhead, marked, at least in the northern hemisphere, by the pole star.

The doors in the cosmic structure are to the east and west to let the sun in and out of the house in its daily transit. Among most New World and Siberian peoples, there are four additional solstice doors which permit entrance and exit of the sun at the summer and winter solstices. Shamans climb the world pole through the hole in the sky-roof to gain power or transcendent knowledge. Between the solstice doors are four house posts which stand at the four cardinal directions, and which support the dome of heaven. At night, when the sun is outside the house, its light shines through the holes in the plank roof (or skin tent-cover as appropriate) as stars. The milky way is the trail of the smoke of the cosmic hearth which is located at the intersection of the cosmic axes.

At night the sun returns to the east via another house in the underworld. While the basic cosmic model calls for at least three zones, the earth, the upperworld, and the underworld, the number of upperworlds and underworlds can be multiplied to as high as thirteen or even more. The Haida, for example, have five upperworlds and five underworlds, each with its own celestial houses and chiefs who are hierarchically ordered according to principles of Haida social organization. The upperworld has a "Chief on high" who is generally benevolent, while the chief of the lowerworld (often a water creature on the coast) is more malevolent and may be conceived of as a devouring monster since it is he, or his symbolic form as a house, which ingests the sun when it disappears from our world each night.

The mechanics and topography of this cosmic model are well developed on two analogies which are, in themselves, related; that of a dwelling or that of a living being or even both. The underworld monster that swallows the sun passes it through its digestive tract during the night only to be swallowed again by a sky monster. The cylclical nature of time is thus often shown as paired chthonian and celestial monsters.

The shaman, as the key intermediary between man and the cosmos, is a microcosm which must be completely harmonized with the powers of the macrocosm to be effective. The shaman can purge blockages to the flow of universal powers in his own system by using emetics and purgatives, or by fasting. Such universal forces flow through animal digestive systems more naturally than they do through humans, consequently the vital organs of animals which are naturally in tune with the universe are capable of revealing the future to shaman augurers. In some areas of the New World the shaman has his own internal organs brought outside his body during his initiation and turned to stones which he subsequently carries with him. To lose such a stone causes the shaman's death (Baer and Snell, 1974:69).

A complementary belief in the intiation of a shaman is that he is completely dismembered and disembowelled to homologize his body structure with that of the universe, after which he is reassembled. A similar concept is seen in the design of chilcat blankets in which atomized and reassembled creatures are intended as cosmic statements in terms of the relationships of the animal portrayed. The universe is of course constructed out of the body parts of the cosmic ancestors and many elements of ritual cannibalism can be interpreted as acts of cosmic regeneration.

The same ancestral analogy is applied to house structures which in turn renders them cosmic. During ritual performances in particular, the house becomes the body of the ancestor. The houseposts are the limbs of the ancestor, the ridgepole is the backbone and the rafters are its ribs. The gable painting can depict the face of the ancestor, either in human or in animal form, with the door as its mouth. Chief Gold's house near Skidegate on the Queen Charlotte Islands provides a classic expression of this equation in which the main gable painting depicts the ancestor as a bird, but its mouth contains a human ancestress whose vagina is the doorway. The double imagery involves both the animal and human equation as well as the mouth and vagina of the ancestor.

On the Northwest Coast much stress is placed on the vertical axis, the "axis mundi" of the cosmos. In house structures for example the backbone of the ancestor is represented by the central beam but the theme is developed again as a vertical pole. These carved poles, which symbolically portray the vertical spinal column of the ancestor are often detached from the house structures and may be differentiated into several types of poles as among the Haida. It is in fact the Haida memorial poles with their segmented cylinders, or *skils* which represent this concept most clearly. The segmented cylinders on the shamanic figures from the Fraser River (Duff, 1956a) represent this concept of the emphasized or extended vertebral column on a vertical axis, which distinguishes man from all other creatures. The same explanation applies to the *skils* on chief's woven hats. In essence the human backbone is the vertical axis of the world, a concept which serves to align the image of the world as a living being, in particular as the ancestors, with the axial geometry of shamanic cosmology.

This emphasis on the vertical axis has further implications for Northwest Coast cultural forms in terms of the stress laid on hierarchical cosmic zones. Everything beneath the surface of the earth or of the water is considered to be part of the underworld. Thus all creatures who live in the water or in holes in the ground are considered underworld creatures. The forest, depending on its distance from the shore, can symbolize the middle or upperworld, although forest animals are usually related to the middle world, and all flying creatures to the upperworld.

Fig. 1. Gitksan chief with amalite, copper, and painted housefront. Chief David Gunanoot at the 'Ksan Village, Hazelton, British Columbia.

Fig. 2. Front of a model Haida house. The painting on the front has usually been interpreted as a grizzly bear but is probably Qonaqada or Wasgo, Haida "chiefs of the seas" (National Museum of Canada).

Fig. 3. Chilkat blanket illustrated reversed from the position in which it is worn, to emphasize its basic housefront shape. The fringe is thus like the smoke rising from the house roof (de Menil collection).

Fig. 4. Shaman's charm stone in form of housefront with sea chief face inscribed upon it. It is close in form to Tsimshian mirrors (National Museum of Canada).

In terms of the horizontal axes of the cosmos, if we take the Haida as an example, the line transecting the sea and the forest is one horizontal world axis that runs up from the beach through the centre of the house and out the back to the forest. On it are arranged the house frontal pole, the fireplace, the back wall screen which separates off the chief's apartment, and the interior house pole. The other horizontal axis runs along the beach between the sea and the forest, and on it are located all of the hearths of the various houses in the village. The body of a dead person cannot be taken across the central axis of the house, but must be removed through an opening made in the nearest wall, for they are considered to have already "crossed over the line." Dancers circle the fireplace in a clockwise direction imitating the sun, four times in reference to the four directions of the world. They turn ninety degrees each time they cross a horizontal axis.

Among the Haida the world pole stands at the centre of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Swanton, 1909) and from it are suspended "the shining strings of heaven." Pulling these strings results in rain, snow, or sleet, depending on the season, which they equate to oolachon eyes, herring eyes, or salmon eyes, respectively. During potlatches, a cord is stretched from the frontal pole (the vertical axis of the world) to the beach, to symbolize the shining string of heaven, and no one is allowed to cross over this string. The total ceremony derives its power from its correct position in relation to the axial microcosm created within the dwelling. Ceremonies properly performed are thus universal in their efficacy.

Animals live in similar houses and villages to those of humans; however, they are under the water, deep in the forest, or up in the sky, as approprite to the particular species. The animal chief's house is always at the centre of the village, just as the head chief's house is located at the centre of human villages. Animals of all species are thus thought to be organized into socially ranked communities exactly like those of man. In fact, they are considered to be other forms of people, who simply live in their own appropriate cosmic zones.

In general, North American Indians conceive of time as divided into various mythological ages. When the world began a reversed order between animals and man prevailed on earth. Man was a weak creature among giant ferocious beasts and he had not yet received the gifts of fire, houses, tools, fish traps and so on, that were later bestowed on him, on the Northwest Coast at least, by the culture hero Raven. Man was food for all the other animals. His body was their sustenance. A new age reversed this order so that animals were obliged to give up their flesh for mankind to eat. The first dimension of reciprocity between men and animals had thus been established.

As long as the remains of the animals were treated with due respect by men, particularly their bones, their souls were speeded on to reincarnation, their bones recovered with flesh, and their service to mankind could be performed anew. Some animals, however, like bears and wolves, killer whales and sharks, reverted to their old ways on occasion, and threatened to eat mankind. This link with the primal epoch made killer whales and bears the special helpers of shamans in their attempts to recapture the powers of the primeval universe. Migrating salmon and birds manifested a different, but equally useful, link with other worlds to which they were thought to go. Among the Haida for example, the salmon appeared every spring at the mouth of the rivers enroute to their spawning grounds which were controlled by a supernatural "Creek Woman" to whose house they were returning. The birds returned from another world in the south under the control of sky beings.

The winter ceremonies, at the time of the winter solstice, especially among the kwakiutl, ensured that the harsh poverty of winter would yield to the bounties of spring, and the world would be renewed for another year. Man's sacred role in the renewal of his world was an essential one. The spirit masters of the fish and game loved sacred songs, drum music, and ceremonies in their honour. It was, in fact, for these winter ceremonies throughout the coast that much of the art was created.

Animal communities were believed to function in much the same way as did the different tribes of humans who spoke different languages and lived in their own special areas. Animals simply spoke other languages and lived in different cosmic zones where men did not dwell. To each other, the animals even looked like men, but usually appeared to humans in their distinctive animal clothes. Animals were certainly not considered inferior to men, since the former's sight was keener, their senses of smell and hearing sharper, their strength and endurance greater, and they were even considered more intelligent than humans since they could speak to all the animals, which humans could not do, and, when they wished, they could speak to humans as well.

The "chiefs" or "masters" of each species were ranked in order of importance as were the various villages and tribes of men. Each cosmic zone had its head chief who was ranked above all the other chiefs of that zone. The killer whales, of which there were several dozen villages around the Queen Charlotte Islands according to the Haida, were the chiefs of all the other sea creatures. While such animal-chief concepts are found all across Canada among hunting and fishing people, the concept

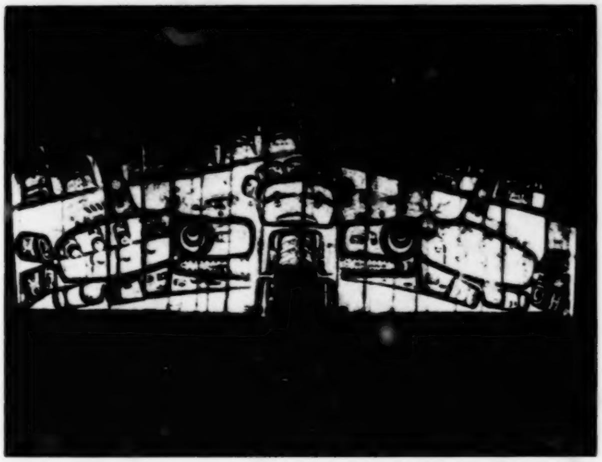


Fig. 5. Tsimshian housefront depicting Naquanaks, the Tsimshian "chief of the seas" flanked by two whales, in a classic pose of "chief of the animals" (Smithsonian Institution collection).

Fig. 6. Gonaqadet mask. The face is framed with miniature house timbers. The whale it holds in its mouth identifies it as "chief of the seas" (Welcome collection, University of California, Los Angeles Museum) Tlingit.

Fig. 7. Swaihwe mask of the Salish. It is designed in three zones—the central bird's head, the monster face, and finally the double-headed bird (Department of External Affairs collection, Ottawa).

Fig. 8. Salish spindle whorl composed of human and bird elements in a pose that is iconographically that of "chief of the animals" and structurally equivalent to the Swaihwe mask (de Menil collection).

of a somewhat more abstract "Master of Wealth" is particularly well developed among the tribes of the Northwest Coast. These supernatural beings could appear in a range of forms, often combining multiple animal, and even human traits together.

Supernatural beings with special powers most frequently had exaggerated sense organs that were frightening to behold. Some had eyes like sea anemones (Swan, 1889) that pulsated on the ends of long stalks, some had long protruding tongues or exaggerated ears. Both horns and exaggerated ears have been associated with shamanism since paleolithic times. Animal ears were much more sensitive than were man's, allowing them to understand the speech of man and other animals. Their special tongues allowed them to speak to each other. Among the Tlingit and the Haida there are many references to bears' ears and tongues as a prerogative of high-ranking chiefs. In the ancient rock art of the coast (MacDonald, 1977: pl. 27) shamans are depicted with the extended tongues, curling ears, and staring eyes that characterize the masters of wealth.

Swanton (1909) describes how the animal chiefs contracted marriages with their equals in other cosmic zones. A killer whale chief (master of the sea animals) would marry a Creek Woman (mistress of the fish in the streams), thus forging alliances between the economically important zones of the lower and middle worlds, since salmon lived in both zones. The offspring of these supernatural marriages were always five daughters and five sons who had power over individual elements, such as rain, snow, favourable winds, etc. The relationship between the forces of nature were thus analogized to human familial relationships and, by the same token, the control of fish and animal wealth was controlled on the principles of generosity, reciprocity and exogamy that prevailed in human society.

The houses of the masters of wealth resembled those of men with similar massive timbers and central hearths. Penned in the corners, or hung from the rafters of these supernatural houses were the animals, or natural forces, which the chiefs controlled. One Haida Creek Woman for example, had oolachon penned in one corner of her house, swans in another, elderberries in another, and the southeast wind in the fourth. Collectively they symbolized the four directions of the world and the three cosmic zones.

From the point of view of human beings, all wealth was controlled by supernatural chiefs or masters. Their prime concern was to gain the favour of these chiefs so they would release animal wealth to humans. Ritual homage was a major source of satisfaction to them; ceremonies performed exactly as they had been from the beginning of time when the laws of nature were laid down. The most important regulation of all according to Lévi-Strauss (1977) was that of exogamy. If wealth was withheld because the chiefs of wealth were angered by a breach of marriage regulations, or by deviations or errors in ritual performances mankind must send its special emissaries, the shamans.

To make amends with the chiefs of wealth for slights or lapses of rituals that they suffered, the shaman would undertake a spirit journey to the house of the animal chiefs. This particular feature of shamanism is shared by all New World and Siberian hunting and fishing peoples (Hultkrantz, 1961). If the traditional means of regaining the chief of wealth's favour by singing, etc, are not successful, and the hunting and fishing remains poor for his people, the shaman may, as a last resort, undertake to exchange human souls for those of game animals or fish with the chiefs of wealth. A Haida myth (Swanton, 1909) describes how gamblers who have recently died are invited to the house of the "master gambler" which lies just beyond the land of souls. If the man wins, the runs of sockeye salmon are increased. If the master gambler wins, more people die in the man's village. In Nootka myths shamans steal babies from neighbouring villages to trade with the chiefs of the sea for whales (D. Ellis, pers. comm. 1976).

Another particular feature of the chiefs of animals, or of wealth in the more general sense, is their marked interest in the sexual affairs of mankind and their desire for human sexual partners (Lévi-Strauss, 1977; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971). Examples abound. The grizzly bear who abducts the woman is a favourite story over much of the coast, while the Haida tell of the killer whale chief who abducts Nansimget's wife, or of the Creek Women who sexually attack young men who cross over their streams without due precautions. It would appear, in fact, that sexual favours on the one hand, and, on the other, the adherance to sexual restrictions (against incest in particular) are expected of humans by the chiefs of wealth in return for the largess they bestow upon mankind.

Consequently, in one respect society is sustained by the reciprocal exchanges of marriage partners with other human groups, regulated by rules of exogamy, while in another respect society is sustained in regard to its food requirements by reciprocal exchanges with animal chiefs. Ordinarily, humans provide, as their part of the exchange, only symbolic wealth in terms of ritual observances, but on occasion they may be forced to exchange, or gamble, human souls, or yield human sex partners. These aspects of reciprocal exchange with the chiefs of wealth through shaman intermediaries can be viewed as a communication system. Therefore, the visual markers for this system in the graphic arts should emphasize the organs of human communication—the eyes, the ears, and the tongue. These markers are manifested in the Swaihwe mask. While this concept can be applied generally to many groups in Canada, the concept of wealth on the Northwest Coast becomes more abstract than elsewhere.

Trade between coastal tribes goes back thousands of years to judge from the archaeological record, and came to involve prestige items such as copper, shells and even slaves and canoes that were more abstract kinds of wealth than were the primary foodstuffs traded among many other Indian tribes. The old models of animal chiefs that controlled game were expanded or modified to incorporate the concept of wealth, but it was never abandoned altogether. Throughout the coast, the chiefs of wealth retain much of their former animal chief identities.

On the north coast the grizzly bear became the master of wealth of one cosmic zone, the forest, and, as the Haida Wasco, or the Gitksan Medeek, the master of the underwater zone as well. In the Bear Mother story, even the bear chief's excrement was copper, the highest form of wealth. The woman berrypicker criticizes his excrement and is duly abducted by his helpers. She has to bury her own excrement and place her copper bracelets on the ground instead to fool his helpers who watch her closely. The one-horned mountain goat of the Gitksan is obviously another chief of wealth, to which can be added all of the sea chiefs of wealth discussed by Lévi-Strauss (1977).

Among the tribes of the central coast, the Kwakiutl and Nootka, the concept is similar but the forms have changed. Tsonoqua, the Kwakiutl wild woman of the woods, is the mistress of wealth, distributing wealth in the form of coppers at wedding feasts. She exacts her due by stealing children from the villages. Her black skin, and eyebrows of grizzly-bear fur, mark her as a bear mother in the form of a human giantess. Among the Salish of the south coast, the Swaihwe is the exact opposit of Tsonoqua in appearance (Lévi-Strauss, 1975a) but similar in function as a master of wealth. Lévi-Strauss (1975b, 1977) further develops the relationship between Swaihwe mask and coppers in structural terms. However, he devotes little attention to the remarkably exaggerated features which characterize the Swaihwe and all of the other water monsters that it is related to, in particular the extended tongue and eyes and the transformed ears and nose. While I would argue that these features are visual metaphors for the superior powers of communication exhibited by the chiefs of wealth, there is a further point which warrants investigation.

In an essay on the Swaihwe mask that has been rather ignored, Badner (1966) pointed out that the Swaihwe mask, in addition to displaying a close affinity to the copper in its basic form, is also structured in the form of a double-headed bird with the face of a shaman on its breast. He illustrates examples with vestigial wings on the sides of the mask which are meaningless unless the whole mask is to be understood as a bird, whereby the tail of the bird is represented by the "tongue" of the mask. Finally, he points out the similarity between the Swaihwe mask structure and the copper bird ornaments from the prehistoric Permain sites in Russia that have been linked to shamanism. Many of these pendants or broaches have double or multiple-headed birds arranged symetrically around a human face, presumably that of the shaman (Badner, 1966: plates 53-58). Many shamans' masks from the Kuskokwim area of Alaska have parts of birds, and sometimes of other animals, arranged around a human face in basically the same way.

According to Eliade (1972:156) the most common type of shaman costume in Siberia was made to imitate birds, since legends of the area maintained that the father of the first shaman was an eagle. Multiple-headed bird figures of ivory are found in sites of the Dorset culture where they are interpreted as relating to shamanism (Taylor and Swinton, 1967). Ridington (1977 ms.) has documented the shamanic association of double-headed geese among the Beaver, and noted its occurrence in Thompson myths where double-headed migratory birds are linked with themes of seasonal decay and renewal. There are many examples of double-headed birds in Northwest Coast art that have often been attributed to models provided by the Russian imperial crest of a double-headed eagle. While the latter may have had reinforcement value in certain areas of Alaska, the widespread occurrence of this theme in myth as well as in art of the Northwest Coast and adjacent tribes, argues for a much more ancient shamanic association.

To take a few exampes from the Salish themselves, the spindle whorl illustrated in figure 8 depicts a woman grasping her navel with both hands, through which passes the shaft of the spindle whorl. Two crested birds grasp her in their talons, their heads almost joining above her head. Bearing in mind the limitations in the decorative field of a spindle whorl, it is not difficult to see this design as a Swaihwe mask. The principle linking the two is that of a human being surrounded by the double profile of a crested bird. The prominent wing joints of the bird contain small faces which take the place of the Swaihwe's exaggerated eyes.

It should also be borne in mind that the spindle whorl was originally set on a long shaft which symbolically represented the axis mundi. The spindle whorl itself is a cosmogram. The shaft penetrates through the whorl in the same manner that the heads of the crested birds penetrate through the centre of the Swaihwe mask. An even more apparent example of the Swaihwe mask elements, applied to yet another Salish cosmic utensil, a rattle, is illustrated in *The Far North Catalogue* (Collins et. al., 1973). This integration among the Salish, in at least three different types of objects of a person surrounded by bird elements, demonstrates that the concept behind the image has been a part of their culture for a very long time. In the cosmology of the Northwest Coast tribes, as a whole, the shaman is assisted through "the-hole-in-the-sky" by the birds which guard it. The motif complex discussed above is therefore symbolic of this transcendence and is predicated on shamanic cosmology.

The importance of a cosmic model which expresses the basic principles of the universe is that the social order is in turn based upon it, according to the structuralists. As stated by Lévi-Strauss (1977:22): "La concordance du code cosmique et du code sociologique se maintient donc jusque dans les détails." It is the existence of a cosmic model in Northwest Coast material culture which will now be explored in one particular category of objects.

Coppers as Cosmograms

Several suggestions as to the possible inspiration for the distinctive shape of the copper have been put forward in the past. Bill Holm (1974 ms.) has suggested that the copper is essentially a human form reduced to the bare essentials. The top half is clearly a head zone in terms of both its form and proportions, and, when decorated by painting or engraving, always portrays a face. The lower panel is the body zone, with the raised ridge indicating the backbone of the figure. Decoration on either side of the central ridge usually portrays ribs sloping down in pairs on either side. Limb appendages are never indicated. It is simply the head and torso of an animal or human figure.

It strikes me that the humanoid form of the copper is a valid assumption, and one that fits the cosmic model described above whereby the human form and the universe are structurally analogized. A further important aspect is that the figure represented is meant to convey the concept of ancestor (single or plural, animal or human, male or female). The specific statement is thus the head and backbone of the ancestor, in which the concept of ancestral proportion is also conveyed in the medium of copper, which is, of course, an essential part of the message as well.

The outline form of the top zone of the copper also warrants further consideration. On the north coast, the top border is often a gentle convex shape, or it can also be peaked, as is usually the form among the Kwakiutl, like the peak of a gabled house. In either case the reference is to the vault of the universe. The side flanges, that can be either parallel or flare out toward the top, represent the supports of heaven, or, on another scale, the corner posts of a house front. The carved or painted face of the ancestor appears within this defined area on both the house and the copper (figs. 1 and 2). The bottom zone of the copper represents the ridgepole and rafters of the house, this time seen in plan view rather that in front elevation. This change in perspective, to emphasize the vertical as well as the horizontal, is characteristic of the Northwest Coast axial cosmology as noted earlier in regard to shamanic figures and house forms.

In the Tlingit myth of Gonaqadet, Waterman (1923: 450) reports that the explanation given to him of a figure on the forehead of a carving of Gonaqadet that has the obvious form of a copper, was that it represented a house front. A mask of Gonaqadet in the Wellcome collection (fig. 6) shows the face of the sea creature in basically human form, but with a whale in its mouth and strips of wood attached around the face which clearly signify a gabled house front. Swanton (1909) illustrated an interior screen from a Haida house at the ancient village of Kiusta which portrays Qonagadet (the Haida equivalent of the Tlingit Gonaqadet). I would even speculate that the Tsimshian painted house front in the Smithsonian Institution (fig. 5) which shows a human figure flanked by two whales, represents Nagunaks, the Tsimshian sea monster who is the master of wealth. We will return to this association between houses and chiefs, or masters, of wealth again later.

The pentagonal form of the gabled house front is again mirrored in the form of the Chilcat dance blanket (fig. 3) that is an upside down house front. Wilson Duff (pers. comm. 1975) noted the parallelism of the dance blanket to the north coast style of amalite (chief's head piece) not only in form but in the analogous visual effect of the swaying fringes of the Chilkat blanket during a dance and wafting eagle down from the top of the dancer's amalite. The border of the amalite is emphasized both in its form and its colour to convey a pentagonal, or dome-shaped, enclosure, just like the top of a copper, or, for that matter, the front of a gabled house. Smoke, which in the cosmic structural model symbolizes the vertical axis of the world (or, in the related cosmogenic model, the male fertilizing principle, or sperm) is portrayed in the amalites by the down that wafts out of the crown of sea-lion whiskers that tops the headdress. The train of ermine skins, sewn in rows to the train of the headdress, represents, in this equation, the segmented backbone of

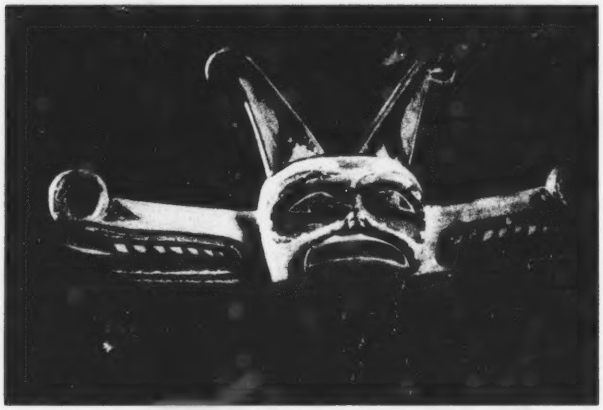


Fig. 9. Sisiutl dance charm showing the exaggerated ears and tongues that symbolize superior powers of communication in much of Northwest Coast Indian art (National Museum of Man collection).

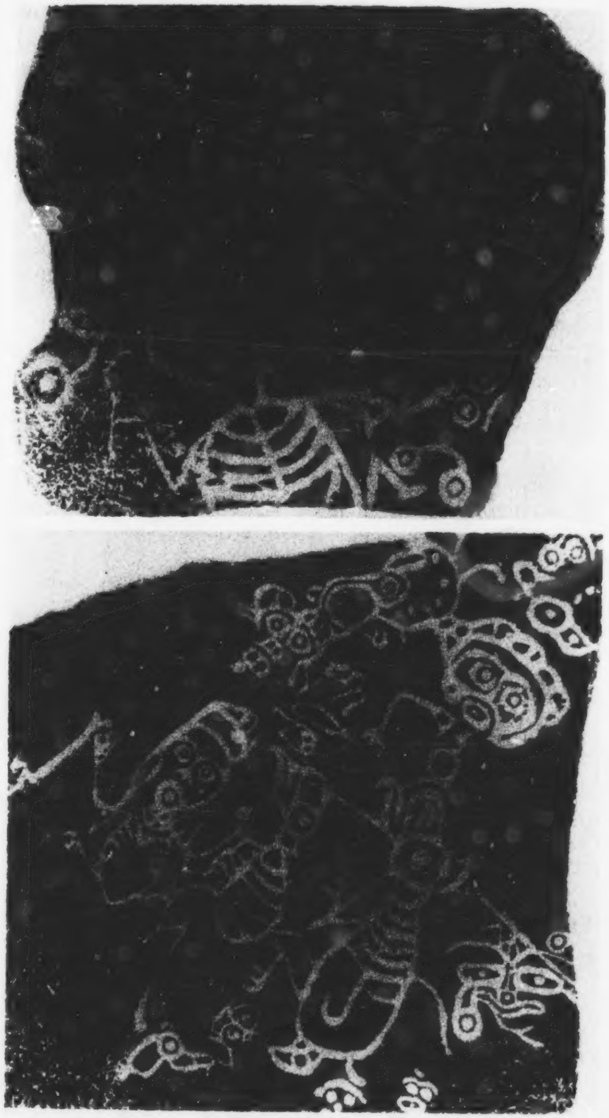


Fig. 10. Rubbings of petroglyphs from Ringbolt Island, Kitselas Canyon, Skeena River, British Columbia. In the top panel the "chief of wealth" is represented with long curly ears and an extended tongue. In the bottom panel, left, one of the eyes of the water spirits is suspended on a stalk like that of Nagunaks. Of the four bears represented in the two panels, all have extended tongues and, all but one, long, curving ears. Essentially, the scene appears to represent two shamans talking with the "chief of the Skeena" and master of the salmon, through bear spirit intermediaries (rubbing by Dave Walker, Terrace).

the ancestor, expressed in another form of wealth, ermine skins. As evidence that such equations were, and still are, recognized by native artists, Joe David, a contemporary printmaker explains the *Eats-qwin* figure in a recent print catalogue in these words (1977): "Wrapped around him is his house, the earth, which he can transform into a ceremonial cape. Above his head is the sky and universe" (punctuation mine).

To return to the copper equation, the three symbolic elements examined so far are the pentagonal, or dome-shaped head zone, the limbless body, and the strongly emphasized backbone, or vertical element. What is missing from the copper is the analogue for smoke (or eagle down, or dance blanket fringe). I would suggest that it is the ring of the copper when it is struck, for as Lévi-Strauss has shown, sound can be a structural equivalent of the component of an equation that is usually expressed visually. It is interesting to note in this regard that the only other object that carries the image of the copper is a type of Kwakiutl rattle.

Elsewhere, the relationship has been suggested, I think with good supporting evidence, that robed dancers in the New World are frequently treated in the same decorative manner as are house posts (Shuster, 1956/58:31) or perhaps this equation should be expressed the other way round—the house post is the dancer which is in turn the cosmic ancestor in the act of creation.

Turning to another type of evidence, I suggested to Wilson Duff, almost a decade ago, that the slate mirrors of the Tsimshian were somehow related, at least in terms of form if not in function, to the copper. Although Emmons (1921) stated that informants had identified them as mirrors, I had a difficult time grasping the significance of that term as my examination of, and experiments with, a sizeable sample of them, showed few had even passable reflective qualities under any circumstances. I later realized that I had missed the informants' point entirely and that the mirrors of one sort or another are a basic part of shamanic apparatus throughout Siberia and much of the New World. In all cases the importance of the mirror to the shaman is as an object of concentration. It is in a sense a mandala. Many examples of such mirrors, such as those of the war shamans among the Plains tribes, are simply rectangular tablets of wood that have a charred spot in the middle. They are not reflective in any way, but by concentrating on the spot the shaman can predict the outcome of battles or raids. In his novel based on Tsimshian oral history, Barbeau (1928) describes a Gitksan shaman using a slate mirror to predict the future.

In eastern Asia the shamanic mirror complex is much more elaborate than in North America. An example of the importance of mirrors among the Tungus tribes is incorporated into Skirokogoroff's (1935:289) description of the shaman's costume:

> The whole apron is covered with a design symbolizing the world-universe. A brass mirror is attached to the apron. This is the most important element of the apron and of the whole costume. According to Shamans, such a mirror cannot be bought, but it must be found in the earth.

In specific reference to the mirror and its survival in Tibet he states further (ibid:278):

> Among all groups the brass mirror, widely used in Lamaism as one of the indispensable components of the altar, is an element without which shamanizing is impossible. So that when there is no costume, the shaman can perform with the mirror alone, while when there is no mirror or its substitute, no performance is possible.

Bronze mirrors in China developed elaborate cosmic symbolism on their back surface from about 600 B.C. until about A.D. 900 (Cammann, 1949). Curiously, they do not occur among the bronze ritual objects of the Shang or Chou dynasties, although no systematic search for structural equivalents has been conducted. Beginning with the Han dynasty, however, Chinese bronze mirrors were widely exported and have been reported from as far abroad as Indonesia, India and Siberia, and, indeed, eventually made their way to Europe via the silk trade, bearing with them much of their zodiacal symbolism.

A detailed consideration of the influence of the cosmic designs of Chinese bronze mirrors on the structure of Tibetan mandalas, and the origin of the "TLV" pattern has been provided by Cammann (1948). This pattern refers to the motifs of the mirrors which signify the coordinates of the Chinese nine-section universe in which the T is the symbol for a gateway. While I would not suggest influence of the TLV motif on Northwest Coast coppers, I would suggest that the T of the copper and the mirror motifs both relate to an antecedent concept of axial cosmology found in shamanism. It could also be said that the T-shaped piece, which is retained from a "destroyed" copper, and which can be used as the armature on which to build a new copper, bears a possible structural relationship to the back pieces of early bronze mirrors that were cast separately, in that they are both axial cosmograms. Bronze mirrors were also popular wedding gifts in China as were coppers on the Northwest Coast.

Before leaving the question of shamanic cosmic mirrors in relation to coppers, it is important to comment on relevant archaeological finds from the Northwest Coast. The earliest example of ground slate shaman mirrors from a prehistoric site dates to about 1000 A.D. which should probably be considered a late example. The lack of earlier dates for mirrors probably reflects their extreme scarcity in site deposits. The earliest worked copper that can be dated comes from the Prince Rupert Harbour in direct association with a rare complex of grave offerings in a cemetery at the Boardwalk Site which has been carbon-dated to approximately 500 years before Christ (MacDonald, 1977:5). Of the dozen copper pieces recovered, six are tubes which contain carved, red cedar plugs. These items are interesting in themselves in reference to what Lévi-Strauss has to say about "cosmic tubes" (1975a, II:105). In addition, there are three flat copper bracelets found in association with the skull of a young female (J. Cybulski, pers. comm. 1977) and a cache of warrior's weapons including clubs and a slate dagger blade. With other burials in the same cemetery at the Boardwalk Site, a pair of copper earings, shaped as simple flat discs, and a variety of small copper beads, were found. All of the pieces were made by cold hammering from nuggets of native copper. Their significance here lies in the fact that they confirm the existence of a fully competent copper metallurgy on the northern coast of British Columbia in the middle of the first millenium B.C.

Summary and Conclusion

I have suggested in this paper that the underlying principle of wide range of Northwest Coast art forms is, in fact, an anthropo-cosmic equation that finds its most succinct expression in the form of a copper. Part of the equation includes what Eliade (1957:173) calls the "Body-House-Cosmos" in which the structural elements and organic functions of the human/animal body are homologized to the physical structures man builds, to his social and ritual structures and, finally, to the elements and physical nature of his universe.

I suggested that this anthropo-cosmic model can best be explored and understood in relation to the shamanic background of Northwest Coast Indian culture. A vital point in my argument is the role of the shaman in negotiating with some manifestation of the "chief of wealth" for the riches that the latter provides to mankind. I view this as a central concept of shamanism among hunting and fishing peoples which probably had its root in the Palaeolithic at least 30,000 years ago.

Wealth is withheld because the chiefs who control it are angered by man's transgressions of the regulations they have imposed on him. According to Lévi-Strauss, the most important of these regulations concern marriage partners. I have suggested that food procurement was an equally critical concern of these societies as was that of marriage partners and that they saw this problem of social viability in terms of food in symbolic terms of wealth as yet another reciprocity system ultimately controlled by the chiefs of wealth in the same way that Lévi-Strauss sees them controlling the marriage system.

The implications of this anthropo-cosmic equation was then investigated in terms of various classic art forms on the Northwest Coast, including houses, shamanic and chiefly regalia, monster masks, and coppers. A tentative suggestion was made that coppers may have been influenced to some extent, both as abstract expressions of wealth associated with marriage gifts, and as cosmograms by the Asiatic mirror complex, perhaps via shamanic mirrors.

Anthropo-cosmic equations of hunting and fishing peoples are now recognized as being incredibly elaborate and pervasive in their influence on both myth and art. The arts of the Northwest Coast Indians are no exception to this observation. We owe a great deal to Wilson Duff who did so much to launch the exploration of equations in Northwest Coast Indian Art.

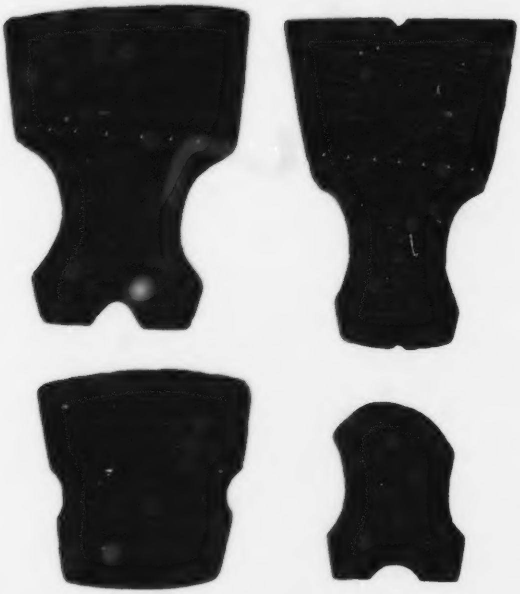


Fig. 11. Examples of Tsimshian polished slate mirrors, one fragment of which bears an incised, bird-human design (National Museum of Man collection).

Fig. 12. Kwakiutl coppers, held by Chief Jonathan Hunt, Fort Rupert (Photo: British Columbia Provincial Museum).

References

Badner, Mino

1966 "The Protruding Tongue and Related Motifs in the Art Styles of the American Northwest Coast, New Zealand and China," in Two Studies of Art in the Pacific Area, Wiener Beitrage zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik, Vienna.

Baer, Gerhard and Wayne W. Snell

1974 "An Ayahuasca Ceremony among the Matsigenka (East-Peru)." Sonderdruck: Zeitschrift Für Ethnologie, Band 99, Heft 1 & 2, Braunschweig.

Parbeau, Marius

1928 "The Downfall of Temleham." Macmillan, Toronto.

Boas, Franz

1902 "The Ethnological Significance of Esoteric Doctrines." Science, 16 (143):872-74.

Cammann, Schuyler V. R.

1948 "The 'TLV' Pattern on Cosmic Mirrors of the Han Dynasty." Journal of the American Oriental Society, 68:159-167.

1949 "Chinese Mirrors and Chinese Civilization." Archaeology, 2(3):114-120.

Collins, Henry B., Frederica de Laguna, Edmund Carpenter, Peter Stone

1973 "The Far North: 2,000 Years of American Eskimo and Indian Art." National Gallery of Art, Washington.

David, Joe

1977 "Eats-qwin," in Northwest Coast Indian Artists Guild 1977 Graphics Collection, Canadian Indian Marketing Services, Ottawa.

Duff, Wilson

1956a "Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Farser River and Gulf of Georgia." Anthropology in British Columbia, No. 5, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

1956b "Unique Stone Artifacts from the Gulf Islands." British Columbia Provincial Museum, Annual Report for 1955, pp. 45-55, Victoria.

1963 "Stone Clubs from the Skeena River Area." British Columbia Provincial Museum, Annual Report for 1962, pp. 2-12, Victoria.

1972 "The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia." Anthropology in British Columbia, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria (reprinted by Indian Education Resources Centre, University of British Columbia).

1975 "Images Stone B.C.: Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture." Hancock House, Saanichton.

Eliade, Mircea

1957 "The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion." Harcourt, Brace and World, New York.

1972 "Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy." Bollingen Series 76, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Emmons, George T.

1921 "Slate Mirrors of the Tsimshian." Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, Misc, no. 15.

Furst, Peter (ed.)

1972 "Flesh of the Gods, The Ritual Use of Hallucinogens," Praeger, New York.

Holm, Bill

1974 ms. "Some Further Conundrums in the Northwest Coast Art." Paper presented at a symposium of Northwest Coast Art, Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles.

Hultkrantz, Ake

1961 "The Owner of Animals in the Religion of the North American Indians. Some General Remarks." The Supernatural Owners of Nature: Nordic Symposium on the Religious Conceptions of Ruling Spirits (Genii Loci, Genii Speciei) and Allied Concepts. ed. Ake Hultkrantz. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, vol. 1, Stockholm, pp. 53-64.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1975a "La Voie des Masques." Editions Albert Skira, 2 vols. "Les Sentiers de la Création," Geneva.

1975b "Histoire d'une Structure," in W. E. A. van Beek and J. H. Scherer, eds. Explorations in the Anthropology of Religion. The Hague.

1977 "Les Dessous D'une Masque." L'Homme, 17(1):5-27.

MacDonald, George F.

1977 ms. "Prehistoric Art of The North Coast" to appear in Prehistoric Art of the Northwest Coast, R. Carlson (ed.), 35 pp.

Reichel-Dolmatoff, Gerardo

1971 "Amazonian Cosmos: The Sexual and Religious Symbolism of the Tukano Indians." University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

1975 "The Shaman and the Jaguar: A Study of Narcotic Drugs Among the Indians of Colombia." Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

Ridington, Robin

1977 ms. "Our Myth, Their Reality." Published in Sound Heritage, Fall 1977.

Ridington, Robin and Tonia Ridington

1970 "The Inner Eye of Shamanism and Totemism." History of Religions, 10:49-61.

Shirokogoroff, Sergei M.

1935 "Psychomental Complex of the Tungus." Kegan, Paul, Trench & Trubner, London.

Shuster, Carl

1956/58 "Genealogical Patterns in the Old and New Worlds." Revista Do Museu Paulista, Nova Série, 10 Sao Paulo.

Swan, James G.

1889 ms. "Notebooks—Sept. 18, 1889." Suzalo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

Swanton, John R.

1909 "Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida." Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History, 8, New York, Leiden.

Taylor, William E. and George Swinton

1967 "Prehistoric Dorset Art." The Beaver, Outfit 298:32-47.

Waterman T. T.

1923 "Some Conundrums in Northwest Coast Art." American Anthropologist, 25:435-451.

Trails of Meaning

Robin Ridington
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wilson Duff saw native art as a medium through which relationships held in the mind are given physical form. He wrote that art objects are meaningful in their representation of relationships rather than in their representation of identifiable objects in the natural or social world. He called these representations "images," because they give substance to the creative capacity of human imagination. In *Images Stone B.C.* he wrote, "Images seem to speak to the eye, but they are really addressed to the mind. They are ways of thinking, in the guise of ways of seeing. The eye can sometimes be satisfied with form alone, but the mind can only be satisfied with meaning, which can be contemplated, more consciously or less, after the eye is closed.... Imagination is what creates images in the first place; perhaps imagination and hard thinking are the keys to what they mean.... The meaning is in the relationships being expressed. The marriage of image and artifact creates a metaphor.... Images hold ideas apart so that they can be seen held together. 'Imaging' is reflecting. 'Imagining' is relating. 'Imaging' is recognizing. 'Imaging' is 'meaning.' Images *are* meanings, which come out in the thinking." (Duff, 1975:12-16).

Stone images were, to Wilson, not just objects, but rather objective representations of relationships held in the minds of the people who created them. As material artifacts they are objective and can be held in the hand; as images, their meaning can be held only in the mind. In *Images Stone B.C.* he described stone as a medium whose objective qualities of hardness and endurance naturally carry messages about relationships that endure over time, but he recognized that enduring relationships themselves are merely reflected in the stone medium, not created by it. A culture's ability to give artifactual objectivity to the images people hold in their minds is determined in large part by the adaptive conditions under which they live. Native people of the Pacific drainage, whose social reality was periodically concentrated and intensified through the concentrations of energy provided by salmon returning to spawn, had more opportunity to produce large, permanent artifacts, representing the significant relationships they held in mind, than did the nomadic hunting people of the Arctic drainage.

When and where adaptive conditions permitted, native people of British Columbia have used stone to represent relationships that are "lasting in fact as well as in concept" (Duff, 1975:18), but concept and image do not depend on a physical medium of artistic representation for their existence. While Pacific-drainage people, particularly those of the Northwest Coast, developed artistic representation into a complex symbolic language, Arctic-drainage people developed the images of their oral tradition into a medium capable of artistic representation. Their enduring conceptualization of the world and the relationships meaningful to them within it has come down to us through their oral tradition. Their images, reflections, relations, recognitions and meanings thus reach out to our own imaginations from the time and place of their origin. These images play upon and presume the life experiences of the nomadic hunting adaptation. Their logic is developed using the terms of this experiential reality. They represent the world as it is known to be real through the experience of these people. The images of this oral tradition of northern nomads were lasting in concept because they represented relationships that were renewed in every generation. They were also lasting in fact because of the permanence of physical form in the natural world within which their experience took place. The true art of these people was their relationship to the world itself. Their images of its physical form represented their relationships to it and to one another. They recognized, in their world, a living entity like themselves. The relationships the northern nomads held in mind were made physical through the tracks they left in their movements across the land. This paper will explore a trail of images that comes down to us from one of these northern nomadic people, the Dunne-za, or Beaver Indians, of the Peace River. The information presented here was gathered during field work from

1964 to 1971. In Dunne-za thought as we may come to know it through their oral tradition, an image of the world was given substance through the creative capacity of the human imagination. Dunne-za is an athapaskan word for "our people," or human being. Their stories told about the world that was real to them, a world of severe contrast between heat and cold, dark and light, a world in which animals, seldom encountered by accident, were known through the tracks that marked the pattern of their movements over the land.

The Dunne-za world was a physical representation of the ideas with which they held it in their minds. It was the object of their thought and art as much as the art objects of the Northwest Coast people were objective representations of the ideas these people held in mind. Behind the physical appearance of the Dunne-za world as it spoke to the eye were the relationships with which it spoke to the mind. Their world was an image of the meaningful relationships that articulated the reality of their experience. Through their oral traditions we may gain some idea of how their world was an artistically crafted image of the relationships these northern nomads held in mind. Their traditions played upon the world's qualities of endurance and objectivity in relation to the movements of people, animals and primary celestial bodies. Their world was itself an artifact of their traditional imagination's construction of it. Its physical properties were meaningful to them in terms of their own relationship to those properties. In their experiences of the world and its trails, image and artifact came together. "The marriage of image and artifact creates a metaphor" (Duff, 1975:16).

The metaphor resulting from the Dunne-za marriage of image and artifact represented the world as a complex living entity with a life cycle like that of other living things. Its physical contours were a metaphor for the terrain of their culture's imagination. Beneath each mountain or valley lay the body of a giant animal that had been sent below the earth's surface when the great transformer Saya taught the Dunne-za of old to be hunters rather than game. The melodic lines of their songs were said to be the turns of a trail to heaven and the steady rhythm of drum, the imprint of tracks passing over this imaginary terrain. In their creation story, the world began as pure and abstract articulation and only later took up substance to flesh out the form. They believed that creation was a continuous process; not a distant and unique act of initiation. They believed equally that the processes of destruction were ongoing.

Creation took place, in their version of the common earth diver motif, with the image of a cross upon the undifferentiated surface of a primal body of water. The cross, drawing out the axes of the world, gave the co-ordinates for a sense of direction without which there could be no meaning to motion. Its point of articulation made possible penetration of the water's abyss. The earth diver, muskrat, dove down to bottom and returned with a tiny speck of dirt beneath his nail. This tiny speck of substance, placed upon the precise point of relationship at the centre of the cross, grew to become the world of Dunne-za reality, retaining as it did so the form of the cross that marked the reference points by which humans were believed still to determine their own relationship to one another and to the environment. The story of creation told simultaneously of processes in the physical world and in the cycle of individual human life experience. In this story image necessarily preceded substance, just as in Dunne-za experience meaningful movement was not possible until a sense of direction had been established. The rest of this paper will describe a system of meaning articulated by the Dunne-za through their oral traditions. The dominant image of their thought centres on their sense of direction. All relationships and hence all thought and meaning turned around this image of the centre just as all human trails returned to the centre that was the social reality of the camp.

Direction, for nomads of the boreal forest, was important practically as well as symbolically. Indeed, for them utility and symbolic function did not seem different as they often do to us. Their symbols penetrated to the core of their adaptive skills. Symbolic function and practical function reinforced one another rather than becoming specialized to different purposes. Their thought, as reflected in their oral traditions, was both concrete in substance and abstract in relationship. Thus, to depreciate these people as has been done by writers, conditioned by their own culture's emphasis on artifact rather than artistry, as being too intensely involved in the food quest to have had leisure for art, is to imply a narrowly materialistic view of art as object rather that art as relationship. Wilson Duff, in going beyond the objective properties of Northwest Coast art into an analysis of the meanings that emerge from its language of relationship, has made it possible to reassess the artistic integrity of the northern nomads whose adaptive requirements precluded the production of massive art objects. In the comsummate artistry of their images, relationship to one another and to their environment, the northern nomads have given artistic meaning to their world and the physical transformations through which they maintained human life within it.

The Dunne-za adaptation as hunters in the boreal forest depended upon maintaining a systematic and controlled relationship between human movement and the movement of animals. The bodies of human beings derived directly and almost entirely from the bodies of animals. Thus a regular and controlled relationship between people and animals was essential for survival. The image of a perfectly secure relationship was ever before them, although never completely realized in fact. In the interplay of myth and experience, the Dunne-za sought to realize their image of a life-sustaining relationship with their natural environment. As nomads and hunters this life-sustaining relationship was brought about through the physical movement of people across their vast and sparsely populated wilderness. Symbolically and practically, hunters moved out from the centre that was the camp, a space in which the story of creation was continually taking place. Life-giving energy came into camp when the trails of hunter and animal came together in just the right time and place. Without the regular realization of this relationship, the camp would quickly have been brought to starvation. Typically about twenty-five to thirty-five people camped together, moving with the seasons over an area as large as 2000 square miles.

The movements of people as a group and as individuals, the movements of animals, and the movements of the sun and moon, were believed to come together in an articulate and meaningful pattern of relationship. All were seen as world travellers, whose trails moved across the earth's surface according to season. The movements of sun and moon and animals were seen not as distant objective events, removed from the human experience, but rather as reflections of it. Sun and moon and animals were held in mind as moving bodies with which the human body could be brought into relationship. In common with humans they were also trail makers. People, animals, and primary celestial bodies came together in the singular image of world travellers whose paths might be brought together in a life-sustaining pattern of relationship. Just as the image of the cross, the point at which two paths come together, preceded the emergence of substance in the creation story, experiencing the image of trails crossing was believed to be a necessary precondition for the encounter between man and animal in the hunt. Before an animal's body could be brought physically into camp, it was believed that an image of the animal's trail articulating with that of the hunter had first to enter camp. Such images of meaningful articulation were believed to follow the path of the sun into camp.

Camps among the Dunne-za were always set up so that there was bush unbroken by human trails in the direction of the rising sun. People slept with their heads in this direction and received images in their dreams. These dream images were believed to have come down to them along the path of the sun. In order to cross trails with an animal in the bush, the hunter had first to make contact with the sun's path across the sky. This image carried metaphorical meaning, for in finding his way in the bush, the Dunne-za hunter judged his direction by constant reference to the sun's path across the sky. In practical terms as well as symbolic ones the hunter began his search for an animal in the bush by finding the sun in the sky. Physically his body during sleep pointed to the direction in which the sun's return to earth was anticipated. Symbolically, his mind was directed along the correct trail that would take his body to where the body of an animal would be waiting for the encounter. Thus, receiving dream images from the place in the which the sun was known with confidence to appear at a later time, gave the hunter confidence that his dream images of the trail ahead of him truly foretold his future encounter with the animal. The logic of the metaphor was reinforced by the very practical application to direction finding that was made of their knowledge about the regularity of the sun's path. A person's ability to place himself in relation to the sun's travel across the sky gave him the information necessary to place himself in physical terrain. Knowledge of his relationship to the sun was a necessary precondition to knowledge of his relationship to the animals that were hunted.

It was believed that animals could not be killed unless they had previously given themselves to the hunter in his dream images. It was said that the real hunt took place in the dream and the physical hunt was only a realization of what had already taken place. At the time the animal was actually taken the "real" hunt that was experienced in the hunter's dream along the sun's path, would already be some days in the past. When the hunters returned to camp with fresh meat, they always told the story of the hunt as it was experienced first in their dream. The dream image was believed to come true in substance with the certainty of their image of the sun's return each day. That the outcome of a particular hunt was, in fact, less than certain, led not to disbelief in the logic of the metaphor but rather to reinterpretations of ambiguities in the images that were experienced or to the possibility of malicious interference by another person. The logic of their insistence on perfect information about the trail ahead was not diminished by the imperfection of their ability to interpret the information from dream images or any other source. Dream images possessed the certainty and authority of remembered experience. Only the time of their realization was uncertain. An animal encountered in dream would certainly be encountered in body on the trail ahead but the time when this would take place could never be known for sure until it had happened.

The trail that goes from place to place in physical space was used as a metaphor for the imagination's ability to cast itself backward and forward in time. It represented the trail of a person's life experiences as they were created in imagination's memory or anticipation. In dreaming, a person was believed not only to anticipate an image of the trail that lay ahead of him but also to relate it to the meaningful pattern of his own past experience. The trail of a person's life led both ahead to weave a pattern of articulation with the trails of animals, and back into the pattern that had already been resolved. In myth and oratory an image was stated and restated; if you follow the tracks of a person ahead in time they will intersect those of an animal; if you follow them back in time they will emerge from such a point of intersection.

The symbolic and experiential focus of this intersection of trails was the vision quest encounter with a medicine animal. Above the place where every older person slept, was hung a medicine bundle containing objects symbolic of the person's medicine animal as it exists in both nature and myth. For instance, the medicine bundle for wolf might contain tiny wolf pups in a wooden hoop symbolic of the world circle as represented by myth in an early stage of creation. Hanging above its possesser's place of sleeping, the medicine bundle was believed to direct and focus the dream images entering the sleeper's mind from the sun's trail. The sun was known to circle once around the world each day, and with each day move in a circle "one chicken step" from its most northerly point of rising at summer solstice to its most southerly point at winter solstice. Each completed circle of its progression from north to south and back to north marked the passage of another year. A person's own trail was perceived as leading back from camp to camp and season to season as the people and the sun completed their nomadic cycles. Eventually the trail led back to the point at which it merged with that of one of the medicine animals. These animals, known from a cycle of myths to have been giants who hunted and killed humans before being transformed by Saya, the culture hero, were believed to be the source of a person's medicine power as symbolized by the medicine bundle through which the dream trail began and ended.

Every child was actually sent out into the bush on a number of occasions before reaching puberty, to seek a medicine power. The acquisition of one or more such powers was believed to be an essential part of every normal person's life cycle experience. In the vision quest as it was described in myth and oral tradition, the child was sent out alone, hungry and thirsty, to a place beneath which one of the giant animals was believed to be. Beneath the appearance of the landscape's reality the deeper reality of myth and medicine was believed to lie in waiting for a child's trail to cross it. If the medicine animal had already been in contact with the child through dreams and if the child remained steadfast and did not run away, speak or drink water, a moment of transformation was believed to have taken place. At this point of intersection, like that point at the centre of the cross in the story of creation, the trails of medicine animal and child merged into one. At this point, the reality of the myths and the reality of experience also became one. At this point, the medicine animal's power became that of the child as well. According to tradition, the child then lived with the animal for days or weeks. He or she forgot human speech and communicated only in the medicine animal's language.

The events of the myth about the animal, as well as the behaviour and attributes of the animal as it exists in nature, became part of the child's second nature. The process as it was described resembles imprinting in newborn animals. From the point of transformation, in which the child's trail merged with that of the medicine animal beneath the appearance of a natural landscape, the two realities remained permanently united. Just as the life of the world could be traced back to a speck of dirt placed at the centre of a point of articulation, the life of an individual could be traced back to its point of articulation with the power of a medicine animal. In dreaming, the adult power holder could extend his imagination both ahead along the trail of his future experience to its point of articulation with an animal whose body would merge with his own and those of his people, and back along the trail of his own past experience to its point of articulation with a medicine animal whose power, in merging with his own will, made possible the accomplishment of control and competence in a real world whose only certainty was the knowledge that without regular contact with game animals, the people would starve and die.

In either direction from where a person lay sleeping an imaginary trail led to a point of intersection and transformation. In the vision quest, a powerless child was transformed by contact with a medicine animal; in the hunt, an animal was transformed by contact with a powerful human. Without the power of the vision quest, the hunt could not take place. Without the child's transformation that marked the beginning of his trail as a powerful and self sufficient human being, the animal's transformation at the end of his trail would not have been possible. The powerful images of this relationship between people and animals both instructed and reflected the development of individual subsistence skills in the life cycles of Dunne-za individuals. These images spoke to eye and mind as well as to practical everyday experience. In myth and oral tradition they instructed people to recognize their own experiences as representations of a familiar pattern. When the child left camp on a vision quest the experience of his transformation was already laid out for him by the mythic description of the giant animal and its supernatural attributes. When the adult hunter left camp to seek the transformation of an animal into life giving food for the people, his experience was already laid out for him by the dream encounter at the crossing of his future trail with that of the animal. The power to bring about the transformation of the hunt was derived from the medicine power acquired in the transformation of the vision quest. In both, the power was represented by the image of a significant and controlled relationship between the trails of person and animal. In both, the form that lay behind the substance of creation made such relationship possible. The power of a few simple images held in mind gave direction to the lives of people as well as to the life of the earth.

In developing the image of a controlled and predictable path around the world, the Dunne-za turned to the sun and moon. Both sun and moon were called Sa and distinguished from one another as daytime Sa and night-time Sa. The two were believed to be the same in the way that a person's body and his shadow were the same. The night-time Sa, following its own cycle of passage across the sky, was like the shadow of the daytime Sa. The Sun's path is high in summer and low in winter while the path of the moon is low in summer and high in winter. They were seen as complex but systematic transformations of one another. The Dunne-za did not believe the sun and moon were physically one but, rather, different bodies whose properties were transformations of one another. One gave light to the trails living people followed by day; the other to the trails shadows of the dead were believed to follow by night. By day, a person's trail always led into the future that had been foretold through his dreams under the controlling influence of his expectation of the sun's return. By night the trails of shadows, ghosts of people who had died but remained bound to earth because of relationships that remained unresolved at the time of their death, led into the past as their shadow memories were believed to reconstruct it. The relationship between moon and sun represented, in Dunne-za tradition, the relationship between a person's body and its shadow. People who died with a burden of unresolved animosity toward others were believed to be bound to travel back along the trail of their lives from camp to camp until they reached a point at which the disharmonies had not yet begun. At this point their shadows were believed to be relieved of the burden holding them down to the trail of their former lives and to float freely up into a realm beyond the sky called yage.

The night-time Sa, because it travels back across the sky from west to east in a 28 day cycle, disappearing behind the sun at new moon and growing at full moon to a perfect reflection of the daytime Sa's constant circle, represented the backward journey of the dead. According to Dunne-za tradition, as repeated from generation to generation by people known as naachī (dreamers) or prophets, only by dancing in a circle around the fire following the path of the sun and the turns of the songs brought down from yaga'tunne, the trail to heaven, could people reduce the length of their travel backward as shadows should they die out of harmony with others. The daytime Sa, moving from east to west and the people dancing from left to right, represented confidence in a future that would continue to sustain life for the people. Any person who broke the circle of harmonious relationship among people was believed to threaten their realization of that future. The daytime Sa's movement along its forward path around the world, the life sustaining co-operation of people with one another, and the continuing exchange of life between people and animals, were considered to be inter-related parts of single overall reality. Any change in one was believed to be related to changes in the others. Thus, the prophets said that if people did not continue to sing and dance, the daytime Sa would stop its seasonal circle of chicken steps from solstice to solstice and winter would continue unbroken by the regeneration of summer. Similarly, if a person was stingy in his distribution of meat to every member of the camp, or if he failed to treat the meat and the bones of animals with the proper respect, the animals would no longer come to him in his dreams from the direction of the daytime Sa's return. Instead, dreams might come from west to east like the monthly path of the night-time Sa and the dreamer would receive no information about the possible meeting with an animal on the trail ahead of him. Similarly the passage of a menstruating woman behind the place where a hunter expected to receive dream images of the trail ahead of him was said to leave a red line across the dream's path, cutting off the hunter from the source of life sustaining information. Menstruation, with its 28 day cycle, was thus seen as an expression of the night-time Sa's retrograde motion with respect to that of the daytime Sa.

Any influence that disturbed the emergence of a pattern of movement in which the trails of sun, people, and animals came together to sustain human life, was believed to be brought about by the malevolence of ghosts or living people who would become ghosts on their death because of their rejection of harmonious social relations. This rejection was symbolized by allegations that such people refused to join in the dance through which the members of a group joined a common trail following the sun's path and the path of the dreamer's songs in a circle around the fire. In order for human life to prevail in the immensity and bitter cold of the northern forest, there was a real need for co-operation and understanding between people, and for a shared understanding common to all people of the behaviours of the animals whose flesh became the flesh of people. In traditional times, hunting was most often done communally. Particularly when hunting with snares or by driving animals, success depended equally upon information about an animal's present location and the probable direction of this movement, and upon the co-ordination of people's movements as they were deployed to carry out the strategic plan of the hunt. Effective execution of a hunt plan depended upon the ability of each person to understand his own part in the overall pattern of motion and to place himself accurately in time and place with respect to the game and his fellow hunters. In addition to a carefully trained ability to recollect landmarks and read trails, Dunne-za direction finding depended upon careful observation of the sun's passage across the sky. Through long practice, the Dunne-za were able to estimate with some accuracy the sun's distance from zenith to horizon and to determine the direction of their own movement by reference to the regular arc of the sun across the sky. Thus in very practical terms, the realization of essential subsistence skills was accurately represented by the images they held in mind. An understanding of the correct pattern of relationship between sun, people and animals held the key to adaptive success in one of the world's most inhospitable environments.

The ideal hunt was the perfect surround in which through following the sun's path in dreaming a group of people could place themselves in perfect relationship to one another so that the animal would be exactly in the centre of their circle. As an ideal, the image of the perfect surround represented control over the significant relationships of Dunne-za reality. In fact it was recognized that perfect regularity did not exist in the behaviour of people and animals and so they looked to the sun, the daytime Sa in the sky for example. When hunting was unsuccessful and life difficult these events were explained in terms of human error or malice. Misfortune was attributed either to the malicious use of medicine power by one person upon another, or to a person's lack of respect for the bodies of animals or other breach of taboo. The selection of one explanation or another depended on whether or not one was directly the victim of misfortune. A person explained his own misfortune as being caused by another's use of medicine power against him, while the person who might be accused of using his power in such a way chose to explain the victim's misfortune as being due to his breach of taboo. (See Ridington, 1968, for a discussion of the politics of medicine fighting among the Dunne-za.) Because relationships between people were never perfectly harmonious and because the hunter's relationship to his game was never perfectly predictable, the association of interpersonal hostility with personal misfortune was an attractive explanation. Dunne-za belief that impaired relationships between members of a communal hunting band impaired the band's effectiveness in establishing its relationship to the animals on which their lives depended was probably an accurate representation of reality under precontact adaptive conditions, just as their realization that the constancy of the sun's motion could be used to give direction and meaning to their own motions was an adaptive representation of reality.

The images of relationships that were both art and adaptation for these nomadic hunters were brought together most succinctly and powerfully in the story of their culture hero's life cycle. The main elements of the story are as follows: A boy named Swan lives with his father and mother, a "good woman." When she dies she asks Swan's father to take another wife who, like herself, comes from where the sun is at midday, but unable to find another woman like her, he takes one from the land of the sunset. This woman dislikes Swan and pretends to have been sexually molested by him. She kills rabbits he has shot in the head, crushing them between her legs. She tells Swan's father his boy caused her to be bloody and scratched between her legs. Swan's father, believing her accusations, takes Swan to an island in the western ocean, suggesting that they circle around its shoreline in opposite directions to determine its size. When Swan is out of sight, his father turns back on his tracks and returns to the canoe in which they came to the island. Swan completes the circle of the land's edge to find his father well off shore. He explains, "We can't both share the same hole. That is why I am leaving you here." Swan cries himself to sleep and in a dream is given advice by a supernatural helper. He is told that by placing pitch on the hot rocks of the island he can catch the migrating ducks and geese who are flying south to escape the coming cold of winter. Thus, Swan uses sources of energy suggested by his name to secure a supply of food. The name of Swan suggests a special relationship to migratory waterbirds, his medicine animals. His use of the sun in his hunt plan presages the name of Saya, sun in the sky, that he will take. The following spring, when his supplies are nearly exhausted, Swan attempts to catch the migratory waterbirds on their return north but this time the sun is not hot enough to melt the pitch. He anticipates his father's return and soon a canoe appears. His father returns, singing a song that asks whether Swan's bones are on land or in the sea. Swan has been careful not to leave any tracks on the eastern side of the island. His father lands and sets out around the island. When he reaches the western side the sun comes out and illuminates fresh tracks. He rushes back to where he left the canoe to see Swan pulling away from shore. Swan tells his father to live as he has lived on the island, but when he returns in ten days his father has starved to death. His father's words that they could not "both share the same hole" came true in a way he had not anticipated. Swan then turns to the east to kill the stepmother whom he blames for his father's death. When Swan finds her he fires arrows at her feet. The arrows take fire as they strike the ground and she is driven by the trail of flaming arrows into a river. As Swan's arrows strike the water it begins to boil and when his stepmother emerges from the other side of the stream the flesh has been cooked from her bones and she falls to the ground, a skeleton. Swan then meets a giant animal who asks him to live with her as her son. He does so until he learns that she lives by hunting and eating people. When she tries to kill a family of humans, Swan kills her by shooting her in the breast. He then takes the name of Saya, sun in the sky, and dedicates himself to overcoming all the other giant animals that live by eating people. A long cycle of stories describes how he overcame the giant representative of every species and sent them beneath the earth where their forms may still be seen beneath the contours of the land. Each story describes the powers the giant animal used to kill people. In transforming them into their present forms, Saya made it possible for Dunne-za children to gain the powers of the giant animals in their own vision quest experiences.

The story of the boy Swan, who becomes Saya the culture hero transformer, gave instructions for the vision quest transformation that every child experienced. Before his or her own vision quest, every child knew that it was Saya who, in transforming all the giant animals, gave people the knowledge and understanding necessary for survival as nomadic hunters. Dunne-za technology relied on technique more than on artifact. Their adaptive strategy depended on carrying as much as possible of their culture around in their heads rather than on their backs. The techniques that Saya made available to the Dunne-za when he transformed the giant animals were realized through the transformative experience of the child in the vision quest. The story of Swan's transformation into Saya provided a model for the child's own experience. When the child, in dream or altered state of consciousness, encountered his medicine animal, the programme for such an encounter would already have been familiar to him through the story of Swan's transformation. In the child's own vision quest the story of Swan becomes real for him because it was now happening in his own experience. Through the vision quest, the child acquired not only a special relationship to his medicine animal, but also the ability to receive dreams from the path of the sun, and to establish relationships between his own trail and those of the animals whose trails will merge with those of the people through him.

Saya's childhood name of Swan was synonymous with dreamer in Dunne-za thought. Swans were believed to be the only animal able to fly through to heaven and return in the same body. Thus we learn that the culture hero's own personal medicine was Swan, giving him the power as sun in the sky, Saya, to fly through to heaven and return in the same body with each new day. The swans' migrations north and south with the seasons were also transformed by Swan's vision quest into the seasonal migration of the sun north and south from winter to summer solstice. From his vantage point on a path high across the sky, Saya was able to see the emerging pattern of trails on earth with unusual clarity. By dreaming and dancing along Saya's path, the Dunne-za attempted to make their own perceptions of reality receptive to the nuances of an emerging pattern of relationship between their own trails and those of the animals whose bodies they sought to transform into their own. The vision quest and the story of Swan's transformation into Saya gave direction to this quest for empowerment just as reference to the sun's path across the sky gave direction to the peoples' own paths across the land. Swan's dream on the island, a world reduced in size and closer to the speck of dirt from which the present world began, gave him information about a technique of subsistence. His dream directed him to use information as familiar to him as his familiarity with his own name and the habits of his namesake, the swan. It directed his attention to the use of information already known to him through tradition and observation. Similarly, the dreams of Dunne-za hunters were not supernaturally inspired in a miraculous or metaphysical sense of the word, but rather merely directed the dreamer's attention to information already available to him. In Dunne-za thought, finding direction through dreaming was considered as natural and reliable as finding direction by reference to the sun's path across the sky. Just as the journey of a person's body by day was directed by reference to the sun's path, the journey of his mind out along the trail that lay ahead was also directed by the same point of reference. The two forms of travel were not opposed as we might see them to be as respectively natural and supernatural, but were both viewed as natural and real movements informed and directed by the same constant point of reference, the sun in the sky.

An image of relationship that could be held in mind without having to be represented by a material object other than the world itself and the trails of people and animals upon it, was the art of the Dunne-za of old. The adaptive conditions under which they lived demanded artistry without artifact. Their technology consisted largely of technique and they valued, like Swan on his island, being able to recreate a complete and comfortable living space at a new location from materials available on the site. With the making of each new camp, the speck of dirt brought up by muskrat and placed upon the place where two trails came into relationship was grown into a self-sustaining world by people whose own lives had been transformed and given direction by their vision quest experiences. The image of Swan's transformation into Saya whose journey across the sky brought about night and day, summer and winter, informed their recreation of the world with each new camp. Thus, although each new camp conformed to the particularities of the chosen site, its orientation remained constant. Sleeping places always pointed to Saya's return to the sky, and dreams always came from the dawning of a person's understanding of the information available to him.

The images of relationship articulated by the Dunne-za in their oral tradition gave direction and organization to their thought and experience. The Dunne-za world and the pattern of trails made by the passage of people and animals over its surface provided the raw material for the art they held in mind. Their art was intensely practical manifesting itself as it did in their mastery of subsistence technique, but it was no less abstract than any other operations of the human imagination. The practicality of their intellectual artistry certainly debased it no more than the commercial involvement of art in the western tradition detracts from its aesthetic value. Indeed its integrity as an essential organizing principle in Dunne-za adaptive success protects it from the shallow aestheticism that often removes western art from the reality of common experience. The images of the Dunne-za oral tradition, like the images in stone that Wilson Duff describes as "ways of thinking in the guise of ways of seeing," represented, to those who used them with familiarity, the integrity of a way of life in which aesthetic and subsistence activities were not separated from one another. Many of the objects described in *Images Stone B.C.* were of utilitarian origin but expressed relationships held in mind that stimulate the modern aesthetic sensitivity. Similarly, Dunne-za images of a meaningful pattern of trails that circle the world are intelligible to us aesthetically and intellectually, while to the Dunne-za they were also and primarily intelligible in terms of their experience as nomadic hunters in the vast northern forest.

Our understanding of images from another culture requires an act of creative but well instructed transformation in our own minds. What was real to the substantive experience of native people before the European invasion, can be real to us, the descendants of the invaders, only through the exercise of an informed imagination. The animals that we encounter are not transformations of giant animals that once hunted people because we as people do not live by hunting animals. Perhaps we see our own domestication in the domestic animals with which we associate ourselves, but the focus of our reality is concerned with machines, the sources of energy that propel them, and the social institutions through which we experience them as real in our lives. Our common bond to the world of meaning under very different adaptive conditions is our ability to perceive a pattern of relationship. In the objects of native art and in the art of oral tradition, our minds can see relationships between entities that are not real in our own substantive experience. As people with minds and imaginations like those who lived lives very different from our own, we can perform the necessary transformations to see the structure of their reality while remaining removed from its substance. Wilson Duff's approach to native art as a system of relationship held in mind, gives direction to the capacity for transformation we share with artists of the land we now call our own. "the eye can sometimes be satisfied with form alone, but the mind can only be satisfied with meaning, which can be contemplated, more consciously or less, after the eye is closed." The form of images from another culture may satisfy our eyes but to satisfy the mind we must relate them to meaning in our own lives. The eyes and experiences of people in other cultures are closed to us just as the eyes and experiences of any other people remain contained within the confines of their subjectivity. We learn of the meaning in their lives only through the medium of symbolic communication. To take their images and beliefs uncritically and without transformation into our own culture and experience would be to destroy their meaning. Their world of meaningful experience passed on with the passage of their way of life and the only meanings left will be those we bring into being for ourselves. We thank Wilson Duff, whose eyes too are now closed, like the outer stone mask that we see illustrated on the cover of *Images Stone B.C.* for leaving us with instructions for beginning the transformation of meaning from the ashes of the past into the fire of our own experience of life.

References

Duff, Wilson

1975 *Images Stone B.C.*, Hancock House, Saanichton.

Ridington, Robin

1968 The Medicine Fight: An Instrument of Political Process Among Beaver Indians, American Anthropologist, Vol. 70, No. 6.

1978 *Swan People: A Study of the Dunne-za Prophet Dance*, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, No. 38, Ottawa.

Four Kwakiutl Themes on Isolation

Susan Reid

One of the themes running through Wilson Duff's *Images Stone B.C.* is the theme of male-female relations. It is not developed, only hinted at, but his concern comes out clearly in his section on seated human figure bowls. Wilson gave the group to which these ceremonial vessels belong the name Fonts of Life because they celebrate female power and are womb and birth images. These female images are the occasion of some of his most astonishing writing.

Over the years I have had many an argument with Wilson over this theme which preoccupied him deeply. It preoccupied him because it suggested questions of dependence and independence, communication and what it is to be human. If we had had time to write the joint book we planned on Northwest Coast forms of perception, we would no doubt have aired our differences there, he basing his views on the visual arts, I mine on the verbal arts. This cannot be now. But in writing on Kwakiutl isolation practices, a topic through which the theme of male-female relations runs like a red thread, I know that I am touching on one of the central preoccupations of his life.

Like other Indian peoples, the Kwakiutl thought it important that individuals should at times be separated from the community. The practice of isolation is always either connected with a life crisis or with the gaining of food. I want to explore here why the Indians thought such separations necessary and whether their reasons have an interest for us today. My aim is to show that isolation—which may take the form of puberty seclusion, spirit quests, hunting taboos, etc., all of which can only be accurately understood by ethnographic observation and adopting the standpoint of the particular culture—has, nevertheless, bearings on our accutely modern concern with communication, independence and interdependence.

I have selected four accounts of isolation which at first blush make a very heterogeneous assortment. They are a myth, the account of a girl's puberty rite, the account of a hunting rite and a dream vision told to Boas' informant by the woman who had it. All come from Boas' ethnographic material on the Kwakiutl. Before I begin a description of the accounts themselves I should like to say something about the principle that connects them and the significance this principle has for current anthropology.

The four accounts I present here were of course selected from a wider range of material on isolation. They are connected as aspects of the question of what it is to be human. Isolation means a distancing from what one has taken for granted, and therefore, inevitably, a critical view of one's society. For the Kwakiutl this critical view—an independence of mind—is the essential quality of adulthood. In this sense their discussion of isolation is a discussion of their idea of humanity. Further, in all four accounts, a woman stands at the centre. In a subsistence society like that of the Kwakiutl, women had to be as independent as men. But their relation to others is still determined by their being women. This provides another connecting thread for the four accounts.

My problem in writing this paper was not one of selection but of the order in which the accounts were to be presented. The pieces are not vignettes but part of an evolving statement. Their relation is not appositional but syntactic. A participant in the culture would know the place each occupies in that silent cultural statement. But, as outsiders, we do not have access to the "map" the participant uses. In order to understand the relation between the pieces we have to arrange them in a logical order.

My first instinct was to put the myth last, as a summing up of all that had gone before. Then I realized that it could function as a blueprint—the backdrop in front of which the concrete figures of ritual and personal experience move. The theme of the myth is that of the anti-social hero who "makes" society. This paradox contains in itself all that can be said about isolation. Society depends on the outsider for its continuing life. Everyone had to be divided from the familiar, the "natural," so that he could see freshly and learn to act according to circumstances and not according to routine. The anti-social hero is typically he who "looks through" society. It was one of the main aims of Kwakiutl society to use his insight.

Anthropology still has a picture of traditional society as based on common consent. The Durkheimian concept of the mechanical society, in which everything and everyone works together to uphold the status quo, is still with us. It would be truer to say of Kwakiutl society that it was based on common dissent. Every member was carefully trained to be able to decide for himself. He was trained to "look through" the symbolic structures he had accepted in childhood to their meaning. Seeing that they were not given but man-made he learnt to use them creatively, becoming, in his time, a maker for others. The Kwakiutl —inveterate punners—expressed the difference between child and adult as that between "accepter" and giver. Children must accept in order to survive, on the material and on the cultural level. Because this is so it is necessary to have the practice of isolation. In isolation they learn to break through to a more immediate experience of reality. Isolation practices, though they went on throughout life, marked the end of childhood. You brought back the treasure of your independence and, because society can only survive as long as it is made up of independent individuals, you were known by your treasure as a giver.

This line of reasoning connects the myth with the puberty rite. Because the myth speaks in images only and because the mythical images are by their nature general, and can convey only a form of the ideal, the myth is complemented by the concrete and particular account of the rite. The puberty rite contains a direct non-symbolic statement about the change from child to adult. Only as an independent doer and giver is the girl a full human being. Only as a full human being can she be a full member of the society.

This basic statement, made by myth and puberty rite together, is subtly qualified in the next two accounts. Here we move a further step from generality towards the reality of experience. The hunting rite is the account of someone who is an adult and independent member of society and whose role in society yet demands that she sacrifice her full humanity. The last account finally questions the concept of full humanity to which the culture reaches out. It points to the experience that to be human is to be in a state of contradiction and dilemma. The Kwakiutl are acutely conscious of this aspect of experience and their consciousness in its turn informs their ideal of independence. In this way the circle closes and the last statement is linked to the first.

We turn to the myth now. It is one of the many Kwakiutl myths about the origin of the winter dance.[1] The heroine is a group of four sisters dominated by the eldest. The myth imagery makes it clear that the group should be taken as a unit, a multiple heroine whom it was convenient to be able to divide when it suited the plot.

> A Kwakiutl chief has four children, girls. They are lazy and disobedient, playing all day with their dolls behind the house. When their father calls them they do not listen and don't obey. One day their father called for them to come into the house because he expected the eldest to become mature. The girls only went farther and farther away. They lost their way in the forest. At night they built a hut of hemlock branches. But it was cold, and the eldest sent the youngest to get some fire from a house that had suddenly appeared nearby. The little girl comes back frightened, saying that the house is not an ordinary house and the whole place seems not to belong to 'our world.' The eldest begins to menstruate. She sends the youngest again and then the next sister to get fire. Neither of them come back, and finally she puts some menstrual blood in her remaining sister's ear and the two go to find their sisters. They see them in the house cut open and hung over the fire to dry. The two girls wail for them. A handsome young man comes in and asks them not to cry, their sisters are only asleep and he will waken them. The bodies are taken down, put on boards and reassembled. When the girls are resuscitated, the young man asks the eldest to marry him. She consents at once. He then asks her name, and she tells him it is Food Giver. Her husband has names that are appellations of the sun, and he tells her they are in the sky world. Food Giver becomes pregnant, growing big very quickly. They all accompany the young husband to his father's house. The father has another sun-name, and his house is of the greatest magnificence. He asks Food Giver to call the child Light-Bringer-of-the-World if it is a girl, and promises his house and a magic treasure as a gift for his grandchild. After some time Food Giver grows melancholy in the sky world. Her husband wraps the four girls into a dressed skin, ties it with a rope made by the spider, and, opening the door of the upper world, lets the bundle down on the rope. The girls have hardly reached ground when their wrapping disappears and they find themselves back in 'our world.' Food Giver immediately gives birth to a child, a girl whom she calls Light-Bringer-of-the-World. The sisters live with the child in a little hut provided by the supernatural husband. Their parents come from the village, the mother to take up the child, the father to greet them and say he will build a house here, by their hut. Food Giver tells him there is no need, her supernatural house will come from the sky. All of her father's people now follow the chief to the woods. After four days, Sun's magnificent house takes the place of the hut. It contains never-emptying baskets of dressed skins, blankets and food, and a box with winter dance paraphernalia. Food Giver is instructed by her invisible husband to give a winter dance. Light-Bringer-of-the-World and her three aunts disappear, taken into Sun's house. Food Giver gives feasts every day. Her father receives the name Gatherer and invites the tribe to his house. The people sing and dance to bring back the initiates. Food Giver distributes dressed skins, blankets and coppers. This was the first winter dance of the Kwakiutl. It was imitated and scattered over all the tribes.

---

[1] A tradition of the Dzawadenox. For the text from which I abstract, see Boas and Hunt 1905:45 ff.

The myth is an isolation story told from the point of view of the inner experience of the heroine. The narrator makes it clear that it is about isolation through the image of the two huts. The first branch hut in the forest is the hut of puberty isolation. The second is the hut of birth isolation. The span of the isolation period is not naturalistic; it covers the time from first menstruation to the birth of the first child. But we can see what it means to convey: it is the span from childhood to full maturity.

The myth is beautifully organized on a series of levels of reference. Structurally they fit into one another like diminishing frames or concentric circles. I have mentioned the biological frame, which spans the period from first menstruation to first child. It has conception as its centre. The same frame serves secondarily as a reference to social status: at puberty the heroine leaves the state of childhood, at the birth of her child she enters society with honours as an adult. The centre from this point of view is the supernatural marriage. Within the biological and status frame we get what might be called a psychological frame. The myth conveys through images the inner experience of isolation. Before we turn to these images, however, we must consider the beginning and end of the myth that surround the whole of the inner story as an outer frame. Here a social and collective rather than a personal and individual point of view is taken. It is only in the light of this outer point of view that the images of inner experience make sense.

As a myth about the origin of the winter dance it is, of course, a story with social rather than individual implications. But the change in the society, which is its subject, is brought about by the change in the heroine. She is the active agent of social change. This is why the myth concentrates on the inner story. The theme is that of the anti-social hero who changes society.

If the heroine, in the beginning of the myth, is lazy and disobedient, she is so as a result of an implicit contrast with a norm of industriousness and obedience. Her society is seen as hard working and hierarchically ordered. We get an indication in the figure of the chief and father as a person of authority. The heroine does not accept this norm; she rebels and as a result exiles herself. From the social point of view she is lost, probably thought of as dead. It is interesting to see what happens when she returns. She does not reform; she has not given up the independence that expressed itself in her lazy and disobedient ways. It is the society which reforms and adopts her norms. One cannot even say that she returns, because her father and the whole tribe move out to her place in the woods. This move to the sacred and hidden place of isolation indicates a profound change in the society. And indeed the father is not any longer a figure of authority, but a gatherer of people and giver of gifts. Nobody works and nobody asks or renders obedience; the people feast on inexhaustible stores and dance. They are guided by Food Giver, but she herself is guided by her supernatural husband.

Kwakiutl ethnography gives us a clue to the meaning of this change. It mirrors the yearly change from the life of the Summer, spent at fishing sites, to the life of the Winter in the permanent winter village. In the Summer the Kwakiutl lived in social groups articulated by rank and headed by a chief. Their main occupation was the gathering and preserving of food. In the Winter the secular rank order lapsed. The people grouped themselves in dancing societies under the patronage of supernatural spirits. They did not work but lived on stores, spending their time feasting and dancing. The winter dance was the Kwakiutl image of the perfect society: a utopia that had a place and a time.

The myth turns this yearly change into a unique event in linear history. In doing this it tells us something no ethnography can convey: how the Kwakiutl imagined the change from the everyday to the perfect society might be brought about. It is brought about by a change in the individual. The perfect society is a society of adults, that is of people who have, like the heroine, gained distance from their society through initiation. They are independent and self-reliant and have a treasure. A treasure is that which you can give away. In the winter ritual every dancer has a treasure. The treasure is first and foremost the independence and maturity you have gained. It is your contribution to the perfect society.

With this is mind we return to the heroine's experience in the myth. The inner story conveys her change from a rebellious child to an independent adult in three great images: a death image, a rebirth image, and central to them an image of the treasure. When she enters the other world the heroine is turned into food. It is an image of utter annihilation and dispersal (modified only by the splitting up of the four sisters into two groups). When she leaves the other world we get by contrast a beautiful image of coming together and growing in the womb. The sky world was the womb in which she grew; she leaves it through the "door of the upper world" as an embryo in a caul on a cord. So she is reborn to "our world." A variant theme is hidden in her name. We only learn her name after the scene of disembowelling, splitting and drying over the fire, like salmon. Then the supernatural asks her name and is told: Food Giver. The myth is saying that she has to become food before she can be a giver of food. At the centre of the death and rebirth images stands the image of the treasure, Sun's magnificent house. This house is the heart image of the myth. It becomes the ceremonial house of the winter dance, symbol of the new society. It replaces the hut of isolation, and it enables the heroine to become indeed a giver.

If we ask ourselves now what these mythical images mean we cannot give an answer. It is impossible to reduce them to ordinary language. Like poetic images they say in a short space more than the longest explanation could cover. Yet it is important to go beyond images and ask ourselves what the conception of being human is that underlies them. In a girl's puberty ceremony some of this conception is made articulate.[2]

A girl went into isolation not at the onset of her first period but four days after. Among the Southern Kwakiutl she does not seem to have spent her isolation in a forest hut, as the myths describe it, but in a secluded cubicle in the house. There she stayed for forty-nine days without a fire and without communication with the outside world. Only a ritual expert attended her at times. Her sudden vanishing from the life of her companions, and the drastic change of situation she experienced herself must have been felt as a sort of death. It is the "entry into the sky world" which, we remember, is an entry through death. In actual fact it is, in myth as in the actual ceremony, an entry into a strange liminal period which ends in new life.[3] In the myth the events of the liminal state are conveyed in images. In the puberty rite they are conveyed in symbolic acts (enacted images) and in verbal teaching. It is the verbal teaching that interests us here, but we must have an idea of the images to get the full force of the statement.

The ritual expert was an elderly woman hired to wash the girl ceremonially. The washings were repeated at carefully calculated intervals corresponding to phases of the moon.[4] They were concluded with a ceremony we find regularly at the end of a Kwakiutl ritual seclusion: the ceremony of going through a ring. The ritual expert had made a soft ring of undyed cedar bark. She held it up and passed it over the girl's head and body, pressing it close. The girl stepped out of it ceremonially, first with her right foot, then with the left.

We can only gauge the significance of this rite if we compare it with others. I shall briefly describe two. Hamatsa novices are washed after initiation as the girl is after her period. Following the ablutions they go through a ring of soft white cedar bark. In their case the ring is fashioned with five protruberances: the rudimentary arms, legs, and head of the man-eating spirit. By going through this ring the novice repeats his initiation in a compressed, emblematic form. He goes once more through the spirit, entering death and passing to new life. A shamanistic cure is a variation on this theme. It is performed in the case of soul loss. The shaman follows the fleeing soul to the land of the dead, catches it and brings it back. While the patient is lying insensible, the shaman puts a ring over his head and passes it down over his body pressing it close. With this the life-soul is restored to the patient and he revives. The two examples show that going through a ring was associated in Kwakiutl culture with a loss of life and with gaining new life. One is tempted to see the prototypical event as the child's dangerous passage through the birth canal, but there is no ethnographic evidence to confirm this. Whatever it may be, we must now ask what the particular meaning of the ceremony is for the girl after her first menstruation.

The period of isolation was concluded with an unobtrusive ceremony at which only the girl, her mother and the ritual expert were present. Yet it is to this ceremony that we owe a direct knowledge of what were, for the Kwakiutl, the principles underlying the puberty isolation. The mother made a little speech, not addressing the girl directly but speaking to her through the ritual expert who said: "Now, my daughter, now you have changed. Now it is known by this blood, now you stopped being a child. Now your mind will be different. You are a grown up woman's child." The speech ends with her asking her daughter to use her woman's power wisely.[5] Its significance lies in the fact that it does not stress fertility but the independence that comes with having stopped being a child. The important change is not physical but in the mind, in the girl's consciousness of herself. She enters society now as a person who is responsible for herself. This is borne out by what Boas records of the actual treatment of the girl after the puberty rites are concluded: "After the girl has finished her purification, she is expected to make mats, baskets and so forth for her own use, and do all kinds of woman's work. Her mother no longer provides for her." (Boas, 1966:370).

What has the account of the puberty rite added to that of the myth? Two things. First a direct, non-symbolic statement about the nature of the change. Such statements are rare in ethnographic reports. Secondly the certainty that it is not the physical change or change in social status that is important (they are corollaries) but the change in consciousness: "now your mind will be different." This is the theme of the rite. What the account does not give us is a demonstration of the change that shows us what goes on in the girl. (Perhaps the experience of change can only be rendered in the language of images.) Instead of demonstrating it asserts. It is, after all, an account of an institution, given from the social point of view. But what it asserts is of the greatest importance: that the Kwakiutl conception of a human being is of someone capable of such a change.

---

[2] Boas 1966:368-71.

[3] At the end of the girl's seclusion a potlatch was given for her. She received a new name and gave away property. The parallel with the images at the end of the myth is obvious.

[4] We find the same calendrical significance at the washing of hamatsa novices after initiation. The parallel suggests that the first period was regarded as a "treasure" similar to that of initiation. See "going through a ring" below.

[5] Boas 1966:371. In Kwakiutl culture almost all direct non-symbolic statements that comment on symbolic actions are made by women. Do women by virtue of their more marginal position in society have more of the necessary critical distance?

Up to now we have considered isolation as a maturation crisis, as the catalyser that makes the child turn into an adult. Now we turn to the part isolation plays in the life of the mature person. Both the women who stand at the centre of the next two accounts are strong independent personalities, fully mature. What does isolation mean to them? Isolation need not necessarily promote personal development or affirm one's personality. It can be a challenge to one's strength by modifying and even curtailing one's humanity. For the hunter's wife, to whom we turn now, it meant giving up part of her humanity for the sake of others.

The professional Kwakiutl hunter and his wife were not ordinary people. The Kwakiutl had no agriculture or domestic animals (except hunting dogs) and in such a society the hunter is always the most important person in the society, even if only symbolically. Kwakiutl social organization shows clear traces of this. Only chiefs led the sea-mammal hunt and only chiefs could give seal feasts. The bear hunter was the younger brother of the chief. An aura of authority surrounded the professional hunter. Someone has said that the figure of the hunter in myth corresponds to the figure of the king in fairy tales. But if the hunter is the "king" of the old hunting society, he is also its scapegoat and sacrificial victim (resembling the priest-king of Frazer's *Golden Bough*). The Kwakiutl were close enough to nature to be conscious of blood guilt vis-à-vis the animals. A distance separated the hunter from ordinary people; he was solitary, almost a recluse, unsociable and taciturn. In a sense his life was a perpetual seclusion. This is a contradiction in terms: isolation is a passage to a new state. The liminal period is the "myth" that forecasts the new reality. But the hunter (like the shaman) had to remain inside the myth. He mediated between men and the world of the animals, not only to gain food but to guard the delicate balance between men and nature. The wife who shared his isolation was the most important link between him and the world of the animals. We owe the account of the hunter's wife to George Hunt, Boas' Kwakiutl helper. Boas had been asking about the signs a hunter leaves behind when he goes on a hunting trip. Hunt could not explain this without describing the relation between the hunter and his wife. To this accident we owe a unique ethnographic account of the part played by a Kwakiutl woman in social life. Hunt stresses that the woman who was capable of playing this part had to have unusual firmness of character and strength of mind. She was known as "the beloved wife of the hunter."[9]

The hunter did not speak to his wife. Their sleeping places were apart in the house. Only during the four days before he went on a hunting trip did the hunter seek out his wife to have intercourse with her, once every evening. An experienced wife never lay down with her husband outside of these occasions. On the fifth morning of these ritual occasions the hunter and his wife arose early to bathe in the river. They once more had intercourse in the woods near the river, then they went into the water together. They acted in perfect unison: took off their blankets at the same time, stepped into the water with the right foot first, then the left, sat down together, and sprinkled first one side, then the other. If the husband was a sea-mammal hunter they dived together, staying under as long as possible. After washing they left the water together and sat on the bank to dry. The husband left first, going straight to the house to collect his weapons. He made marks on the ground outside the house to indicate to his wife the direction he had taken. Some time after he had left her the woman walked back slowly to the house. She did not speak to anyone on her way, and did not leave the house while her husband was away. She moved around the house slowly and quietly. She ate little, taking small mouthfuls and chewing each long and carefully. She never ate enough to be satisfied.

The account touches on an aspect of isolation which is almost inaccessible to us: isolation as transformation into a non-human being. In her seclusion the hunter's wife transforms herself into the animal her husband is hunting. The transformation is suggested in a few touches only, but they conjure up a whole picture. The animal (or flock) is moving slowing in search of food. It is a browsing animal, it snatches small mouthfuls at a time and chews the cud. It spends its time drifting about and eating. The animal the woman has transformed herself into is presumably a mountain goat. It is important for the hunt that the animal should browse quietly and move without hurry or nervous apprehension. The hunter's wife is the animal at peace. The same principle operates when the husband is a sea-mammal hunter. Hunt says that the sea hunter's wife lies down quietly, covering herself and avoiding movement. Seals and sea otters are, of course, best taken asleep.

---

[9] Boas 1921:639 ff

Why does the hunter's wife forgo a normal social life to withdraw into this inhuman world of silence and pure physical being? To say she is making sympathetic magic is clearly not an explanation. The explanation lies in a cultural attitude to nature. The Kwakiutl were acutely aware that civilization—that which basically makes us human—separates us from the animals and leads us to exploit and destroy the non-human world. They believed that there have to be people who are willing to sacrifice a part of their human nature to diminish the gap between culture and nature and prevent it from becoming an unbridgeable gulf. In return the animals respond by taking pity on man's need and giving themselves to him as food. The friendly animal meets the hunter peacefully and without fear, to become his game. The hunter's wife is this animal. The closeness and unity between her and her husband, so solemnly stressed before he leaves, shows that she is the animal married to a human—the animal-wife of myth whose marriage was a pledge that men may hunt the species. The animal wife symbolizes the animal friendly to man, the animal that gives itself voluntarily, the harmony that exists between men and animals in spite of the guilt of hunting. It is for the sake of the values contained in this symbol that the hunter's wife forgoes social life.

Through his animal wife the hunter is literally "in touch" with the game. The bond between him and his wife was so important that the Kwakiutl made a distinction between the "true" wife of the hunter and just a wife. If the hunter's wife was an experienced and discreet woman she was "the beloved wife of the hunter." If, on the other hand, she was "young and foolish" and did a lot of gadding about, talking to people, her husband left no signs for her. He went through ritual intercourse and bathing with another woman, and this woman transformed herself into the animal for him while he was away. The hunter's need for a "true" wife was socially recognized: the "foolish" wife gave gifts to his "sweetheart," and the sweetheart's husband countenanced the relationship.

The theme of the curtailing of humanity through isolation is related to that of communication. In the account of the hunter's wife the motif of communication, which is present in all isolation accounts, comes to the foreground. The hunter and his wife do not speak to one another. Yet they are physically so close that one can say that sexual communication takes the place of verbal communication. This recalls Lévi-Strauss' observation that in myth the linguistic and sexual codes are interchangeable. Considered from this angle our four accounts form, in fact, a transformational set. One has to be careful to determine accurately the point of view from which the account is given in order to be capable of deciding which combination is explored. The myth concentrates on the inner or psychological point of view; like the account of the hunter's wife it is a story of a supernatural marriage. No barrier is imposed here. There is full verbal and sexual communication. The puberty rite is seen from the outside or social point of view. It is a maturation crisis meant to produce a total change. There is therefore a total cutting off of communication on the verbal and sexual level. The story of the hunter and his wife is again told from the inside or psychological point of view. There is sexual communication between the husband and his supernatural wife but a ban on verbal communication. One is reminded of those mythical hierogamies where the human partner is forbidden to speak. It is perhaps worth remarking that the linguistic is the distinctly human code and not speaking always a modification of one's humanity. The last account to which we turn now is dominated by the problem of communication. Though it is also the story of a supernatural marriage it is told from the outside or social point of view, in this case the point of view of the marriage with the human partner. The woman is permitted verbal communication with her husband but no sexual communication.

This account is different in character from all the preceding ones. It is the personal account of a woman—whom I shall call K.—of a supernatural experience in a dream. That K.'s experience is authentic there can be no doubt, yet her dream vision belongs to a Kwakiutl cultural genre. Boas reports two in his *Religion of the Kwakiutl Indians*. They have the same plot but different morals. K.'s story is incomparably the more interesting of the two.[7]

> K. is alone in her village. One evening she sees a handsome stranger at the other end of the village site, gazing at her. That night a fit of dizziness overcomes her, and the man is suddenly in her house and lying down with her on the bed. He tells her he is the Long-Life-Maker (the name for a great but ambiguous supernatural power), and that he has come to sleep with her for four nights and give her a magic treasure that will increase her property. The treasure will, however, only be effective if she abstains from intercourse with her husband for a year. Should she sleep with her husband during that time, the treasure will disappear and they will be poor forever. Long-Life-Maker comes to her on four successive nights. Her husband is kept on the island where he has gone hunting by bad weather. Before leaving K. the supernatural advises her not to tell

---

[7] Boas 1930:246-50. Boas transcribes the name of the woman K·!ā-maxalas.

> her husband about him. K. asks her husband not to come close to her when he returns. She also tells him they must sleep apart for a year. He immediately understands, and they encourage one another to be steadfast. The husband decides to leave for a long hunting trip early next morning. When he returns he sleeps on the other side of the fire. In spite of their good will, the marriage begins to go wrong. They stop speaking to one another, and behave as if they did not know one another. After four months of not speaking K. sees resentment and evil in her husband's face and she herself resents and mistrusts him. One night she lets herself go to sleep early, thinking her husband asleep. She wakes to find him having intercourse with her. Furiously she kicks him off and tells him that she has lost a great treasure and that they will be poor now. He replies humbly: 'Oh great is your word, mistress, I have really done wrong in what I have done to you. I could not stand it that it did not seem as though we knew each other. I was very sick at heart. Therefore I think I gave in and went to you. Will the Supernatural One not pity us?' K. blames herself bitterly. The supernatural appears to her in a dream as an old man and tells her she has hurt her treasure, which was a very rare one, and must expect trouble. In her depression it occurs to her to go on an excursion with her husband to 'make our hearts happy.' They try to forget the treasure and joke with one another, but in vain, they cannot forget that they have done wrong. In this situation K. decides to disobey her vision altogether, and she sleeps with her husband. The next morning they return home. On rounding the point by their village they see their house in flames. When they arrive all is burnt. From then on they are poor.

K.'s story shows us an isolation situation which must have been more difficult to handle than any other, though it was apparently not an unusual one. She is trapped by being in isolation and in the middle of everyday life at once. Her supernatural experience puts her into the liminal state which we know as a dangerous and difficult passage; but she is not protected by an institutionalized recognition of that state and not allowed physical seclusion. So, in the end, she is defeated by the tension between the demands of her inner life and her ordinary life.

Yet, looking close, we see that the very conditions of her experience demanded the clash. If she could have gone into seclusion her loyalty to the vision could not have been tested. She had, in mythical terms, contracted a supernatural marriage, and this precludes marriage to a mortal. But K. was married; her marriage was an emotional and social reality.

We can only guess at the psychological meaning of her experience. Property is connected with personality among the Kwakiutl, since to have property means you can be a giver. To give away is not simply a mark of inherited status but a sign of the complete personality, a sign that you have "gone through." "Going through" takes many forms in Kwakiutl culture, and K.'s experience is, without doubt, one of them. The treasure must have meant, then, the promise of dignity and completion on the level of personality. Through her vision K. struggles to bring the new realization of herself into being. Such a process is necessarily self-centred. It always involves a clash with the demands others have on us. What makes K.'s story interesting is that it is this clash itself (in the form of her abstinence) which takes on the nature of the test. The test is not part of the mythical world of inner experience, it is the dispute between inner and outer worlds.

Let us for a moment examine the Kwakiutl ideal that is embodied in the treasure. The treasure means total emancipation and independence. It is an idea of complete humanity, but it is a heroic or aristocratic conception of the idea. The treasure is gained in isolation under difficult conditions and it enables the hero who has gained it to be a giver to his people. K.'s story questions this aristocratic conception, or, at least it questions whether it represents the idea of complete humanity. It sets against the heroic values the value of personal relations or love. K. uses her independence in the end to decide for the relationship with her husband against her visionary commitment. We applaud her choice. Her values are our values. But I am not sure whether we do not do injustice to the subtlety of K.'s experience, or whether it would have appeared to her or another Kwakiutl in this light. The value put on gaining property among the Kwakiutl is in some way parallel to our evaluation of honour. Until very recently our conception of nobility also demanded that we put honour before love. We have rejected this now as a male ideal, and therefore as an incomplete conception of humanity. But in fact to have honour among our fellow men (in the Kwakiutl sense of a name, or prestige) is part of being human. K.'s predicament is real: in choosing love—in a situation where love is surely needed—she deprives not only herself but also her husband of "honour" for the rest of their lives.

The solution to her predicament would seem to have lain in the condition of her isolation. She was debarred from sexual communication only, with her husband. If she could have substituted verbal for sexual communication (in an inversion of the relation between the hunter and his wife) she could have reconciled the conditions of her test with the demands of love. I have mentioned before that the linguistic code is the distinctly human one. But K.'s story is not about possibilities but about human reality. It is only in myth that the linguistic and sexual codes are interchangeable. Human beings are physical and intellectual, animal and human—in Kwakiutl terms bound and free—at once. When K. and her husband are deprived of communication on the physical level they forget how to communicate at all and begin to hate. In this situation K.'s decision was the right one, for to pursue ruthlessly the ideal of "honour" would have been inhuman, and to live in mistrust and hatred with her husband subhuman.

But in losing her treasure and becoming poor she also injured her humanity. The last theme of our series is, then, that to be "fully human" is not possible. To be human is a predicament.

References

Boas, Franz

1921 *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl: Based on Data Collected by George Hunt.* Bureau of American Ethnology, 35th Annual Report, Part 1. Washington.

1930 *The Religion of the Kwakiutl Indians.* Columbia University Press, New York.

1966 *Kwakiutl Ethnography,* ed. Helen Codere. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Boas, Franz and George Hunt

1905 *Kwakiutl Texts.* Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. 3, Leiden.

Trois Souvenirs de Wilson Duff

C. Lévi-Strauss

DE L'ACADEMIE FRANCAISE
PROFESSEUR AU COLLEGE DE FRANCE

C'est lors de mon premier séjour à Vancouver, en février 1973, que je connus Wilson Duff. Un petit problème d'ordre géographique me préoccupait; il voulut bien dessiner lui-même et me donner une carte montrant l'emplacement de lieux mentionnés dans les mythes, que je n'arrivais pas à situer. J'eus ainsi la révélation de la richesse et de la précision de son savoir, et du sentiment concret qu'il avait des moindres détails. Ces qualités sont déjà manifestes dans son ancien travail sur les *Upper Stalo Indians* que je n'avais pas encore lu, et dont il me donna un exemplaire; je n'ai pas cessé de m'en servir depuis.

A la même époque, il m'invita à un séminaire qu'il réunissait chez lui pour un petit groupe de collègues et d'étudiants. S'aidant de diapositives, il parla longuement des *panel pipes* en argilite haida. Sa profonde admiration pour les arts de la côte ressortait de tous ses propos, en même temps que ce besoin anxieux et jamais satisfait qu'il éprouvait d'en pénétrer la signification la plus secrète, fut-ce au delà de ce que les auteurs avaient su ou voulu exprimer. Pourtant, de manière intuitive, il en avait parfaitement saisi l'esprit : quand je le questionnai sur la provenance d'un beau masque accroché au mur de son studio, il me répondit qu'il l'avait sculpté lui-même du temps qu'il travaillait avec Mungo Martin.

Je retrouvai Wilson Duff à Vancouver quand j'y revins en juillet 1974. Il eut la gentillesse de participer à plusieurs des séances du séminaire que je tenais à U.B.C. On le sentait comme torturé par les problèmes touchant à la psychologie, je dirais presque à la métaphysique de l'art. Un jour, il me demanda *ex abrupto* si je pouvais définir la fonction du masque: c'était, il m'en souvient, à la suite d'un brillant exposé du Dr. Marjorie Halpin sur les *naxnox* des Tsimshian et leurs représentations figurées. Après un moment d'hésitation, je répondis à Duff qu'à mon avis, la fonction essentielle du masque est de transformer l'individu porteur en espèce; mais je vis bien que cette formule d'inspiration logique, et dénuée de tout mysticisme, le laissait insatisfait.

Notre troisième rencontre eut lieu à Paris où il venait chercher le masque en pierre tsimshian du Musée de l'Homme, pour le présenter, avec celui d'Ottawa, dans la sensationelle exposition consacrée à l'art de la pierre en Colombie britannique, exposition qu'il avait conçue et qu'il finissait d'organiser. A peine arrivé, il accepta de dîner chez moi le 20 janvier 1975, pour me remettre le superbe médaillon de cravate que Bill Reid venait de terminer à mon intention et dont lui-même avait bien voulu se charger. Nous passâmes la soirée à regarder et à discuter les photographies des objets composant l'exposition qui s'ouvrirait quelques semaines plus tard. C'était surtout la dualité des masques de Paris et d'Ottawa qui le tourmentait: pourquoi, ne cessait-il de se demander et de me demander, éprouverait-on le besoin de faire le masque d'un masque? Pourtant, il ne savait pas encore que les deux masques, pour la première fois rapprochés depuis au moins un siècle, s'adapteraient exactement l'un à l'autre.

Quand, après son retour, il m'écrivit pour me communiquer cette grande nouvelle, il répéta sa question avec une insistance encore plus pressante. Si mes souvenirs sont exacts—car je ne gardai pas copie de ma lettre—je lui répondis qu'à mon sens, il ne posait pas la vraie question. Qu'il y eût deux masques n'avait rien d'étonnant, puisqu'on connait sur la côte d'innombrables masques articulés montrant alternativement des visages différents, ou deux aspects du même visage. Dans ce cas particulier, continuais-je, le choix de la pierre comme matière première excluait tout dispositif de charnières, et contraignait donc de faire deux masques, au lieu d'un masque unique à volets mobiles ou à yeux articulés. Par conséquent, le problème n'était pas de savoir pourquoi il y avait deux masques, l'un aux yeux ouverts, l'autre aux yeux fermés, mais pourquoi on avait choisi de les sculpter dans la pierre. Car, à partir du moment où ils devaient être en pierre, la dualité que Wilson Duff jugeait si troublante s'expliquait aisément par des impératifs techniques.

Je poursuivais en signalant à mon correspondant l'existence, chez les Piro du Pérou occidental, de masques non pas en pierre, certes, mais en poterie, c'est-à-dire une matière proche de l'autre par la dureté. Or, ces masques semblent représenter des personnages surnaturels vêtus de pierre, qui dorment pendant la saison sèche et deviennent alors eux-mêmes durs comme de la pierre, se réveillent à la saison des orages et dévorent les humains (Baer, 1938:13, n. 41). En dépit de l'éloignement géographique, le parallèle avec les masques tsimshian en pierre, et aux yeus clos ou grand ouverts, me semblait assez suggestif pour qu'il valut la peine, disais-je, de rechercher si la mythologie des Tsimshian n'incluerait pas des représentations du même type.

Wilson Duff ne répondit jamais à ma lettre. Une fois de plus, sans doute, je l'avais déçu en lui proposant une explication trop simple en comparaison des grands mystères auxquels son âme inquiète aspirait. Pensant à Wilson Duff tel que je l'ai connu, à ses vastes connaissances qu'il a si peu consignées par écrit et qui ont irrémédiablement disparu avec lui, je me demande si, en fin de compte, ce n'est pas de cette quête désespérée de mystères insondables—peut-être parce qu'ils étaient surtout une exigence de son esprit—que mourut cet homme simple, charmant, désintéressé et serviable, et qui fut aussi un grand savant.

References

Baer, G.

"The pahotko-Masks of the Piro (Eastern Peru)," *Bulletin de la Société suisse des Américanistes.* No. 38, Genève, 1974, pp. 1-16.

Three Memories of Wilson Duff

C. Lévi-Strauss

DE L'ACADEMIE FRANCAISE
PROFESSEUR AU COLLEGE DE FRANCE

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
BY
Monique Layton

It was during my first stay in Vancouver, in February 1973, that I met Wilson Duff. A small geographical problem was then disturbing me and he was kind enough to draw a map for me showing the location of sites mentioned in myths, which I had been unable to locate myself. Thus I discovered the wealth and precision of his knowledge, and the concrete feeling he had for the smallest details. These qualities were already manifest in his work on the *Upper Stalo Indians*, which I had not yet read; I have not ceased to use the copy he gave me then.

He invited me at the same time to attend a seminar he was organizing at his home for a small group of colleagues and students. Showing slides, he spoke at length on Haida argillite panel pipes. His profound admiration for the arts of the West Coast was obvious at all times, and so was his anxious need, always unsatisfied, to penetrate their most secret meaning, even beyond the meaning assigned by the artists themselves. Yet, intuitively, he had caught their spirit perfectly: when I questioned him about a beautiful mask hanging on his wall, he told me that he had carved it himself when he was working with Mungo Martin.

I saw Wilson Duff again when I went to Vancouver in July 1974. He kindly took part in several sessions of the seminar I held at the University of British Columbia. He was, one felt, tormented by problems related to the psychology—I would even say the metaphysics—of art. One day, he asked me suddenly if I could define the function of the mask. It was, I recall, after a brilliant paper presented by Dr. Marjorie Halpin on the *naxnox* of the Tsimshian and their figurative representation. After a moment of hesitation, I told Duff that I believed the essential function of the mask to be the transformation of the individual wearing it into another being. But it was clear that this logical answer, devoid of any mysticism, left him unsatisfied.

Our third meeting took place in Paris, where he had come to take the Tsimshian mask at the Musée de l'Homme to show it, together with the mask from Ottawa, at the sensational exhibition of stone art in British Columbia, an exhibition which he had planned himself and had just finished organizing.

Upon his arrival, he came to have dinner at my house, on January 20, 1975, and gave me the superb tie pin which Bill Reid had made for me and which Duff had agreed to bring to me. We spent the evening looking at, and discussing, the photographs of the objects to be shown at the exhibition a few weeks later. The duality of the masks in Paris and Ottawa especially tormented him. Why, he kept asking himself and me, would one feel the need to make the mask of a mask? And he did not know yet that the two masks, when brought together for the first time in at least a century, would match each other exactly.

After his return, when he wrote to let me know this great news, he repeated his question more urgently still. I did not keep a copy of my letter, but if I remember correctly, I answered him that, to my mind, he was not asking the right question. It was not surprising that there should be two masks, since one knows on the West Coast of numerous articulated masks alternately showing different faces, or two aspects of the same face. In this particular case, I wrote, the choice of stone as material precluded the use of any type of hinges, and required the need for two masks instead of a single one with movable panels or articulated eyes. Consequently, the question was not why there were two masks, one with the eyes open and the other with the eyes closed, but why they were carved in stone. For, since these masks were made of stone, the duality that Wilson Duff found so disturbing was easily explained by a technical necessity.

I went on to mention to him the existence, among the Piro of western Peru, of masks made—not of stone, certainly—but of clay, a material almost as hard. These masks seem to represent supernatural characters dressed in stone, who sleep during the dry season and become themselves as hard as stone, and who wake up during the stormy season and devour human beings (Baer, 1938:13,

n. 41). In spite of the geographical distance, the parallelism with the Tsimshian stone masks with the eyes closed or wide open, would make it worth looking into Tsimshian mythology to find out whether such representations existed.

Wilson Duff never answered my letter. Once again, I had probably disappointed him by offering him an explanation that was too simple for the great mysteries his soul was seeking. Thinking of Wilson Duff as I knew him, of his vast knowledge that forever disappeared with him since he committed so little of it to writing. I wonder if it was not, after all, this desperate quest for infinite mysteries—perhaps because they were above all an exigency of his mind—that killed this unaffected, charming, altruistic and kind man, who was also a great scholar.

C. L.-S.

References

Baer, C.

"The pahotko-Masks of the Piro (Eastern Peru)," *Bulletin de la Société suisse des Américanistes*, No. 38, Geneva, 1974, pp. 1-16.

Stone Mask Reunion

Hilary Stewart

It was January 1975, and most of the work in putting together *Images Stone B.C.* had been done. A year had gone by since the three of us jointly began to organize, research and assemble the unique exhibition of thirty centuries of Northwest Coast Indian stone sculpture.

Richard Simmins, Director of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, had conceived the idea for the show that would eventually display 136 pieces of sculptured stone, many never before shown publicly. He headed the organization, acquired the funding, and smoothed out the many problems that would beset an exhibition of this magnitude. For academic and artistic advisor Richard had naturally chosen Wilson Duff, with whom he had worked on the reknowned *Arts of the Raven* exhibition held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1967. Wilson had asked me to be his research assistant, and I did research and photography, both in Canada and the United States, for most of a year. From the multitude of stone images that surfaced from the many museums and private collections, Wilson had brought form and cohesion to the exhibit, and had written extensively on the material for the 191-page catalogue.

By then almost all the sculptures chosen to be exhibited had been shipped to the art gallery in Victoria, where the show was to open March 4, before touring Canada for a year. The sculptures had arrived in crates and boxes of all sizes—from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., from the Museum of the American Indian, New York, and from museums and private collections in Prince Rupert, Montreal, Lillooet, Seattle, Fort Langley, Ottawa and Alaska, among other places. The photographs that resulted from travel and research now materialized into reality as the shelves of the double-locked vault filled with an extraordinary wealth and variety of sculptured stone pieces.

One major item had still to arrive. It was the stone mask that was the twin of the mask from the Museum of Man in Ottawa. Known to us in Canada only by a single illustration and a description, it was owned by the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, France. The two masks, the only ones of stone known for the Northwest Coast, appeared to be identical except that the Ottawa mask had no eyes (or closed eyes), while the other had open, circular perforations for eyes. Collected nearly a hundred years ago, the open-eyed mask was so treasured by the Parisian museum that only once had it been allowed to leave the country. Since then other attempts to borrow it for exhibit had failed. Wilson Duff knew this, but there was a serious gleam in his eye the day he said "Wouldn't it be something if we could get the stone mask from Paris—*bring the two masks together again!*"

The idea of reuniting the twin masks became paramount and he and Richard Simmins set about achieving the improbable. Considerable correspondance in letters and telegrams took place between Victoria and Paris: the former expressing the quality and importance of the exhibition and the role of the mask, the latter hesitant and concerned for the safety of the irreplaceable treasure. Eventually Paris gave partial consent and a telegram, in English, said in part "...agree for Victoria but not for a roving exhibition entailing too many risks."

This meant the mask would have to be returned after its first two months in Victoria, others across Canada would never get to see this magnificent piece of art—a part of their country's native heritage. While this seemed a disappointment, the real triumph lay in the initial agreement to allow the mask out of the country. One step at a time.

Richard had offered to have the mask brought to Victoria by hand to avoid commercial shipment and thus ensure its safety at all times. He took out an insurance policy on the mask for a phenomenal amount and checked with customs on the necessary requirements for its import. The stage was set.

Wilson was to fly to Paris to collect the mask, and then try to persuade the museum officials to allow it to remain in Canada for the duration of the exhibit. The coming together of the two masks represented the high point of the show and a special way to present them was being devised. Using one-way mirror glass, the dramatic impact of the double image would provide a powerful climax to the display. In our minds there was no question that the twin masks must be shared with the rest of the country.

Wilson flew to Paris, and on the evening of January 21 was due back in Vancouver. A few people went to the airport to meet him while others gathered at his house bringing the necessary prerequisites for a celebration. Dressed in a new suit worthy of his first visit to Europe and the famed French capital, a jubilant Wilson arrived back at the house carrying a small, unpainted wooden box measuring about a foot square. He put the box down on the chesterfield. There was general gaiety and celebration and champagne was poured as we heard about the Eiffel Tower, the Champs Élysées, the Musée de l'Homme, lunch with Professor Claude Lévi-Strauss, and other wonders of Paris as well as encounters with customs before someone said "Wilson, the MASK, can we see the mask?"

He picked up the box and put it down in the middle of the floor. More champagne was poured and everyone gathered around. From his inside jacket pocket Wilson produced a small screwdriver. With the box had come documents to help clear customs and the handy screwdriver had facilitated its inspection by customs officials. Wilson handed me the screwdriver and with it the honour of opening the box.

The excitement was intense but quiet, the anticipation guarded. Someone had a camera and recorded the procedure, step by step. One . . . two . . . three . . . four screws were removed from the corners—an appropriate number—and I lifted off the lid of the box. I removed a thick piece of padding and there was the mask looking up at us looking down at it. I carefully lifted out the stone face with the round eyes-that-never-close, and it was greeted by our collective "ahs" and Wilson's shining grin. It was a magnificent piece of sculpture filled with all the grace, elegance, and power of the Ottawa mask, and yet it was different. The measurements of the two were exactly the same yet the face was somehow smaller and more refined. The twin masks were not as identical as photos had led us to believe. Not only that, but the Paris mask had two perforations through each ear, a feature that had not shown up in the only available photo of it, a feature lacking in its twin.

The new discoveries gave rise to the idea that the Paris mask, with its open eyes, might have been worn firmly attached to a dancer's head, fastened by thongs or a harness utilizing the ear perforations. Early data described a wooden loop of willow attached to the inside of the mask that showed teeth marks on it, an indication that the wearer could help support the weight of the heavy mask with his teeth. Thus the hands would be freed to hold the other mask (with the closed eyes) over the first, creating a transformation during the dance, an effect frequently used in certain ceremonial dancing. If his theory was correct, Wilson speculated that the Ottawa mask would have to fit right over the Paris mask. Would it? The answer to the tantalizing question would have to wait.

There still remained the other part of Wilson's mission to Paris. Had he been able to persuade the authorities at the Musée de l'Homme to let the mask stay and travel in Canada for a year? His casual reply of "Oh yes" underplayed the deep feeling of joy and success that this achievement brought. Now the exhibition *Images Stone B.C.* was complete; the two masks would be brought together again after being separated for so long by time and distance, and would stay together for the duration of the show—a year.

The powerful stone face was duly returned to its box and the lid screwed down. With the celebration party over, I was assigned the task of taking it to the vault at the art gallery in Victoria early the next morning. As I set the box in my small car, the responsibility for the mask weighed heavily in spite of the massive insurance. At this point the intrinsic value meant really nothing. Stopping at my service station for gas, in preparation for an early-morning drive to the ferry, my friendly neighbourhood service station attendant peered through the car window and asked "What yer got in the box?"

"A halloween mask," I said.

The ferry left the Tsawwassen terminal in the grey morning mist; the sky was overcast; snow dusted the sleeping Gulf Islands and the weather man said there was more on the way.

Once off the ferry I drove straight to Victoria and the art gallery, and there Director Richard Simmins and Naomi Panchyson (most able secretary for the exhibition) met me with anticipation. We trooped downstairs and Richard unlocked the two sets of doors into the vault. Lying in the silent vault, sightless eyes blindly staring at the ceiling, the Ottawa mask was surrounded by the rest of the magnificent assembly of sculpture. I produced the faithful little screwdriver and removed the box lid. We lifted out the stone mask with its round open eyes and laid it beside its twin. They were indeed different, but they were also strikingly alike—the curve of the "frog mouth," the flared nostrils, the high cheek bones and the swept-back brow. Both showed traces of pigment on the smooth and polished stone. The ears and the mouth bore the remains of a red pigment, the cheeks and face still held tinges of blue-green.

The Paris twin comes home. The exciting moment when Hilary Stewart took the stone mask from its travelling box, a moment shared by an elated Wilson Duff (photo by Brad Campbell).

Now to find the answer to the question that had arisen the evening before. The sightless mask was lifted carefully and placed over the face of its seeing twin . . . the two nested together in a close, snug fit. It was a deeply moving moment as the two masks came together again for the first time in a hundred years or more. The mask from Ottawa had been collected at the Tsimshian village of Kitkatla in 1879; the other was collected either on the Nass River or at Metlakatla also at the end of the last century. It was also an exciting moment as it supported Wilson's theory and opened a whole new insight into understanding the meaning of the twin masks of stone.

The following day Wilson hurried to Victoria to share in the joy of the discovery. For him it was the highlight of the entire exhibition, an exhilarating experience, the fulfilment of a year's work. Although the exhibition catalogue was already in production, the publisher was able to include an epilogue that Wilson wrote about fitting together the two masks, and I took additional photographs to illustrate the discovery.

Wilson wrote to Professor Lévi-Strauss with news of his findings and enclosed Xerox copies of the photos. His friend replied "Many thanks for your letter together with Xeroxes. The 'fit' of the two masks is indeed astounding. Congratulations for having cracked their secret."

The following week Wilson was talking with his longtime friend Della Kew, a native of the Musqueam Band with an understanding and sensitivity of many of the old cultural ways. Della was aware that her people had certain recognized ways of storing and treating their Swaixwe masks, and she told Wilson she had a very strong feeling that the two stone masks should be together, one over the other, while in storage. Wilson nodded and said he had a similar feeling. At his request the twin stone masks then lay together in the vault, each cradled by the other, each a part of the whole, two halves of an equation.

Now it seems that Wilson Duff is also a part of those masks, for the masks have become synonymous with Wilson Duff and *Images Stone B.C.* There were many highlights in his life, and many achievements and discoveries, but the bringing together of these two great works of Northwest Coast Indian art must surely be one of the most exciting.

For Wilson: As a Contribution to the Conversation*

Robin Ridington
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wilson Duff wrote more than he published and communicated to those around him more than he wrote. He circulated periodic mimeographed stories, poems, and pieces of whimsey, in a kind of silent trade with those of us with whom he also maintained more formal public role relations. I, for one, reciprocated with similar efforts that I wrote but did not publish. Wilson's were always meticulously crafted and completely thought out, be they a poem speculating on the symbolic implications of modern relativistic cosmology (he and I both attended a series of lectures on "Relativity and Cosmology" given by William Kauffman in 1974 through the UBC Centre for Continuing Education), or a spoof on the grading of academic papers in university courses.

Most importantly, he wrote tightly organized notes in prose and poetry about the symbols of Northwest Coast art. Many of these he wrote to himself. In one of them he said that, to him, receiving a message from the mind of a person in another time and culture was like being that person. He saw that an understanding of another mind's working puts one's own mind in instantaneous communication with that other mind's reality. The communication is instantaneous because the thoughts are an identity. They are a single intersubjective entity unbounded by temporal and spatial particularity. They are a pair of eyes resolving a single image. They are complementary approaches to the singularity of experience. Wilson expressed the identity he experienced in receiving messages coded in the symbolic language of Northwest Coast art in the opening lines of a poem entitled "Death is A Lie."

> If I know
> (as I do know)
> that I have received, in this life,
> a message
> sent long ago, during a different life;
> a secret message,
> sent only once,
> known only to the sender:
>
> then I know
> that the message I have received
> must be from my
> self.

In writing "notes to my self" I believe he intended to extend the intersubjective reality of messages received from native people of long ago, to your experience and to mine. In seeing his *self* in them I believe he also recognized his *self* in us and our *selves* in him. The direction of a gap in time seems irrelevant to his argument. In Wilson's unpublished poems and notes he has originated a message, sent only once, and real only in our receipt of it, passing on to us his identity in the reflective images of Northwest Coast art. He wrote, "Life is the truth in the message."

Wilson's work was both intensely personal and universalistic. He saw his *self* in the images of Northwest Coast art and he saw in his *self*, universal images. He saw that the reality of artistic images is in the reflection they cast upon the living imagination. He saw in the artifacts a medium of communication that stood out of time. In the objective fact of art, he saw a synthesis of opposing subjectivities. He once wrote a note to himself (and I believe simultaneously to us) entitled, "It is all a Duff Rorschach," in which he distinguished between associations of an artifact "which have intrinsic meaning or meaning because of mythic or historical associations," and relationships or structures independent of an artifact embedded in history. He stressed that meaning is dynamically relational rather than statically objective. The artifact is an act of creation rather than an inanimate object. In his view, like that of the native peoples of the Northwest Coast, an object's reality resides in its indwelling spirit rather than in its inert materiality. In this view I do not believe he had reference to supernaturalism but rather to the animation of symbolic communication; the living reality of its intersubjectivity. Relationships, he saw as syntactic structures dynamically generating meaning, while associations were, to his way of thinking, mere mnenomic devices. He wrote, "the perfect relationship is the pair of eyes. Each is twin, one, both. The ultimate symbol is the one eye that is both."

---

* Wilson gave me a copy of *Images Stone B.C.* inscribed "For Robin, as a contribution to the conversation."

The perfect relationship was ever in his mind's eye. He saw each pair of eyes resolve into the image of a single mind and he saw each pair of minds converge upon what he called "singular images" in the stones worked by native people of long ago. He saw his own mind as one of a pair, the other being that of the artist/philosopher who gave an image representation in stone to speak to him and to us across the bridge of time.

For the individual, two eyes resolve a single image in the mind. For the culture, two minds resolve a singular image in the abstract space of intersubjectivity. The two Tsimshian masks, one with eyes ever open through their stone facade, and the other with eyes of stone ever closed, spoke to Wilson of eyes and minds and their intersubjective imaginations. He carried the one with open eyes back to these shores from its Paris museum, to be reunited, for a time, with the mate whose dream once masked its own vision. For Wilson, this journey was a supreme act of communication, consummated in the discovery that the two masks were literally, as he had known they were symbolically, a pair of systematically reunited visions. His bringing them together once again into physical relationship brought home to him, once again, the animation of symbolic relationship. I believe Wilson understood the metaphysical to be symbolic rather than supernatural. Certainly he valued careful thinking over wishful thinking. He understood and respected the indwelling spirits of the pair of stone masks as he understood and respected his own indwelling spirit, without succumbing to the numbing mnenomic association of an uncritical reverence.

Brought by Wilson once again into physical relationship, the stone mask with open eyes was itself masked by the one with eyes that could only reflect the mind within it. Wilson saw that the mask's mask, the one with closed eyes, would hold water and cast an image back upon its bearer, while the one with open eyes would allow water to flow from it. He saw in the other mask, a mirror and container of the inner mask's imagination and in the role played to another mind's perception, the conscious and articulate manifestation of an inner will. Wilson returned to Vancouver from Paris to activate one of the most powerfully animated symbolic devices his mind had yet engaged.

He thought of a mask as a "self made mirror" and offered, in a poem, to help you and me make one for ourselves. The mask from Paris, that Wilson brought by air across an ocean of water, he thought to "turn upside down and backwards use it as a vessel for water, in which you can see your reflection." In his thought experiment, he observed with us that "the water runs out the eyes." He instructed us to, "Stop them up, but not by plugging the holes, not by destroying her sight. Do it by putting her in a container that can hold as much as she can, that can hold everything she can see: the outer mask." We learn from this poem that his travelling companion from Paris was a woman and a visionary. He instructs us to "put her in a container, that can hold as much as she can, that can hold everything she can see: the outer mask." This mask with inward looking eyes, contains her vision, and Wilson's and our own. It contains the vision of the artist/philosopher whose thought has come to life, indwelling in our minds. "Now fill them with water," he crossed an ocean of water with her, "let it find its level," the sea gives us the Northwest Coast, "and use it as your mirror." An understanding of another mind's working puts one's own mind in instantaneous communication with that other mind's reality. The communication is instantaneous because the thoughts are an identity. "The ultimate symbol is the one eye that is both." "Gaze into the water, gaze at your reflection, think about your mirror, think about your mask, and think about the one who made it for you." For me it was Wilson Duff who brought to life the indwelling spirit of the masks. For Wilson, it was Charles Edenshaw.

In Wilson's eyes, the images of Northwest Coast artists were mirrors in which he saw his own reflection, but I believe his insight transcended the redundancy of narcissism and the self-deception of spiritualism. At times, some dark and inner genie may have dominated the direction of his thought, but even then, he formed his ideas with meticulous precision and fidelity to the formal properties of the art he had in mind. He wrote out of a conviction that temporal and cultural barriers are not absolute isolating mechanisms but rather, canalizing boundaries giving direction to the flow of meaning between minds that could otherwise never make connection. Perhaps because Wilson had difficulty emerging from his own subjective isolation into an inter-subjective space in common with his contemporaries, he devoted more of himself than most of us are able, to deciphering messages from people of other times and cultures removed from here and now.

He wrote, "A message is a gift of meaning. Communication, part of every message, is part of every gift . . . a message sent and received is a mutual gift of meaning." He saw the artifacts that come down to us from other times and cultures as messages about relationships articulated in the minds of their creators and recreated in our own perception of their articulation. He saw in the artifacts of past cultural life representation of relationships rather than representation of objects. To Wilson, the message of a stone frog tobacco mortar, for instance, was more than the juxtaposition of crest icon on utilitarian object. It was more than a representation of frog in a stone medium. It was a representation of the process of transformation in a frog medium. He saw the mouth of frog metamorphose into his legs and body suggestive of metamorphoses in the life cycles of frogs and humans. In a poem, "Frog's Mirror," Wilson tells us Frog is transformation, pure and absolute. Frog is the mirror itself, the insubstantial plane of transformation. "He is the opposite of everything else, including me, and everything I am opposite of, and himself. His mirror shows him no reflection. His beginning and end are the same because he has no story . . . He is the unit of dissolution . . . Everybody else has memory, he has the opposite. He cannot sing, because he has forgotten his previous note . . . My mirror shows me all the things in the universe. Frog's mirror is empty. I am myself and all that I see in the mirror. Frog is only the mirror." In frog's mirror, Wilson saw his self and the universe. In frog he saw, not only icon and objective representation, but also the shimmering transformation of a mirror's pure reflection. Frog, who moves easily back and forth across the looking glass of the water's surface, appeared to Wilson, as he thought it did to Northwest Coast artists, as a symbol of transformative relationship. In artistic representation of frog he perceived symbolic representation of transformation.

Just as in the structural study of myth, meaning is seen to emerge from the relationship of elements within a story rather than to remain at an unproductive level of observation such as "this is a story about a frog," Wilson's work attempted to give us a structural study of artistic relationships. Whether or not we agree with every interpretation Wilson offered about the messages encoded in the structure of Northwest Coast artistic representation, I think we must thank him for insisting that the messages were there in art as they are in myth. To say, "this is a story about Frog," is unproductive in the same way that it is unproductive to say "this object represents frog." The message in both myth and art is more likely to be, "frog, in whole and in part," represents to us our own experience of transformation and so connects us to transformative experience in the culture of story teller and artist. While myth uses words to give us symbols of transformation, art has to show "how you actually do such things." Both convey their message through structural relationship. "What the art represents is not what it means. The manifest iconography is only the surface. Icons take on meaning when they are metaphors for symbols, and when they exhibit meaningful relationships." In artistic metaphor meaning emerges from the relationship of elements within an object as it strikes the mind. It is the mind that articulates the elements. The art object, like the written word, merely represents relationships created in one mind for recreation in another. More accurately, the art object is not a word but a complete statement, a syntactic rather than a definitional meaning. "This art consists of statements of relatedness; subjects and predicates, the subjects, 'things,' the predicates, 'acts.' The underlying premise is that all things are related to one another. They are in some manner twins; and all acts are related to one another. They are in some manner reciprocal acts. This single work of art may show one twin in a reciprocal act, (the other half implied)."

In the twin stone masks, Wilson found images of compelling power and productivity. He viewed culture, not as mere unanalyzed habit, but as a creative synthesis of thought and experience within an environment already structured by tradition. More succinctly, he told us that "art is good to think." The masks were, for Wilson, a reflexive essay in symbolic language about symbolic language. As he might have put it, they were thought thinking about itself. Each mask, without the other, is an incomplete thought just as each end of a communication is incomplete until the circuit has been completed. "A thing is a twin thing; an act is a reciprocal act. A thing and its twin are one, a little piece of 'both'. A thing is half of a reciprocal pair with each other thing, all other things. A thing is a reciprocal pair. An act is a reciprocal act. Each act I do, I do to myself. Each act I do can be done to me; I do it to myself. The unit is complementarity. The field is time."

The open eyes of the first mask imply the closed eyes of its complement. The second mask itself brings that promise to completion and in so doing completes the circuit. The meaning is relational rather than objective, emerging from the interaction of both elements, just as the meaning of a word lies not in its dictionary definition but in its position within a syntactic structure. Wilson saw the syntactic structures of meaningful relationship in Northwest Coast art as hierarchical in the way that Chomsky saw meaning emerging hierarchically from the syntactic structures of a generative grammar. Each of the twin masks presented relationships to the mind and together their relationship to one another elevated the communication to another level of meaning. Together the two masks are a complete system of thought. Together, they are at the same time incomplete until they are brought together with their mutual complment, the human face that wears them. Thus another level of the hierarchy emerges by logical inference from its physical absence from the system. Behind the face is the altogether more abstract level of the mind itself. The system of thought the twin masks represent emerges at a higher level of abstraction only in relation to the living presence of the thinker's subjectivity.

Wilson's own mind mind leapt from the stone faces as objects in a museum collection to their meaning as a system of thought almost taking for granted their very rich and explicit symbolic meaning in Tsimshian culture itself. As Marjorie Halpin demonstrates with such authority in her paper in this volume, "'Seeing' in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks," Tsimshian symbolism played upon the opposition of darkness and light, blindness and sight, images of power and naturalistic images, to represent the reality of Tsimshian cultural experience. As "faces of power," the masks represent Tsimshian thought about the experience of personal transformation. They are representations of subjective experience as it is mediated by the symbolic structure of Tsimshian culture. Halpin's careful placement of the masks in their cultural context brings their symbolic meaning clearly into focus.

Wilson so internalized his own understanding of this cultural context that he passed through it in his leap from objective artifact to subjective system of thought. Out of his immense knowledge of northwest coast ethnography, Wilson could see the masks as an essay on symbolic thought presented in symbolic images, "good for thinking as well as seeing." Abstracted from their meaning as representations of Tsimshian reality, Wilson saw in them representations of pure and perfect abstract relationship. "The perfect relationship is a pair of eyes. Each is twin, one, both. The ultimate symbol is the one eye that is both." That one eye dominated Wilson's vision.

Wilson lived a large part of his life in a circuit closed to those of us unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the fierce abstraction of this ultimate symbol. He communicated so intensely with the closed eyes of the past, that his relations to the living suffered. Perhaps he ultimately came to feel that only by becoming one of the dead, could his message to the living achieve completion. If there is value in the vision of Wilson Duff, it is only we, the living, who can now make it our own.

"You will not go down twice to the same river." (Heraclitus)

You are the river,
Flowing
both ways at once.
This brief moment, your life, is
one going to the river,
one cupful of water.

You are the thirst
You drink.

You are the wheel,
turning,
both ways at once.
This brief moment, your life, is
one touching of your rim to earth,
as you journey.

Who feels that touch?
You.

You are the eye,
gazing,
into itself.

This brief moment, your life, is
one glint of recognition.

It comforts you.
You turn your gaze to the river.

Wilson Duff

"Seeing" in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks[1]

Marjorie Halpin
MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Carol Sheehan
ETHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
GLENBOW MUSEUM, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Several times in his *Images Stone B.C.* (1975), Wilson Duff uses the Tsimshian "twin" stone masks (Figures 1 and 2) as capstones for his discussions of the meanings inhering in Northwest Coast prehistoric stone sculpture. For example, he says that "Life is a pair of twin stone masks which are the very same but have opposite eyes" (*ibid.*:59). The masks are the "supreme masterwork of the exhibition [in which] everything comes into focus in the eyes" (*ibid.*:162); they are the "culminating image of thirty centuries of stone sculpture. . . ." (*ibid.*:165). What Wilson saw as the "living paradoxes in myth and life" explored by Northwest Coast artists were for him to be found as self-evidently in these masks as they were to be found: "They are, with full self-consciousness, a paradox. What the paradox is about is whatever 'Masks' are about, and whatever 'seeing' is about (*ibid.*:162). The paradox, for Wilson, was about "self-recognition" (*ibid.*:166).

In this paper I will attempt to find and say in more explicit terms what masks and "seeing" were for the Tsimshian. This will be based on how masks were used by Tsimshian-speaking peoples as revealed by ethnographic evidence. The paper thus buttresses Wilson's statements in a way that he did not live to do—by providing some of those kinds of evidence more normally acceptable to anthropologists than what he called "my most audacious imaginings about the meanings of the images" (*ibid.*:13). His most audacious imaginings were, of course, based upon twenty-five years of sustained attention to both the images and the ethnography of the Northwest Coast, including most of the ethnographic evidence used in this paper (much of which was made available to me by him). That he preferred to call his knowledge "imaginings" was part of his own paradox, and the paradox of anthropology as well.

Power

Since I will describe masks later as the *faces of power*, a general discussion of power, revolving around the Tsimshian terms *halait* and *naxnox*, will be presented in order to locate the wearing of masks within a broader religious framework.

Halait refers to any shamanic or ritual manifestation of power. It is both the dance and the dancer, the person manifesting power as well as the ritual event within which the manifestation occurs. *Naxnox* is a personification of power, or that which is manifested in halait. While it can be inferred from mythological contexts and ritual action that power in its pure or generalized aspect is the light (heat) or potency of Heaven (which is personified as the Chief of Heaven or Chief Sun), it seldom appears in this form, but is refracted into numerous concrete personifications—animals, monsters, shining youths, crystals, and the myriad humanoid beings to be described below who were impersonated by means of masks. According to Boas (1916:543), naxnox are the "helpers" of Heaven; in more modern terms they mediate the divine and human. In halait, humans become naxnox (participate in divinity) either through possession or the wearing of masks. Several kinds of halait can be distinguished.

1. *Shamanism*. The shaman is called *swensk* ("blowing") *halait*, referring to the opposite but similar practices of sucking and blowing through which his cures were effected. "The name is derived from the halait's practice of sucking the portion of his patient's body where the

---

[1] Earlier versions of this paper were read at a seminar conducted by Professor Claude Lévi-Strauss at the University of British Columbia in the summer of 1974, and at a symposium *Traditions and Perspectives of Northwest Coast Art*, sponsored by the Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles and the UCLA Museum of Cultural History in February 1975. Museum data were collected while I was recipient of a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship, which is gratefully acknowledged. I am also grateful to Professor Bill Holm for giving me information and photographs of the monkey mask in the Peabody Museum, Harvard, and to Professors Lévi-Strauss, John Dunn, Richard Preston, Michael Ames, Kenelm Burridge, Wayne Suttles, Charles Laughlin, Simon Ottenberg, and Carole Farber for helpful comments, and to Steven McNeary for information on contemporary Nass River dances.

pain is, after he has finished his dance, and then blowing the thing which he is supposed to have removed out through the smoke hole" (Beynon, 1956-57, Vol. 2). Masks representing shamans (who do not themselves wear masks while curing) show the mouth with pursed lips which could be interpreted as either sucking or blowing. Tsimshian shamanic possession is of the classic North American Indian form in which a novice was afflicted by a mysterious illness during which he became unconscious and had visions of animal helpers whom he would later be able to call upon to help him diagnose and cure others. During the illness, which was possession by his naxnox or tutelary, he seemed as if dead. When he recovered he had received power songs, called his *ksenełk* or "breath." Chiefs sometimes performed in the manner of curing shamans in ritual halaits.

2. *Initiation*. Initiation is the ritual possession of different novices by the same initiating power. Unlike shamanic possession, it was planned, managed, and regularized in form. There were several initiating powers among the Tsimshian, two of which created ritual moieties in the society and were open to (and apparently required of) anyone whose family had enough wealth to finance an initiation. The moieties were the *nulim* (Dog Eaters) and *mitła* (Dancers). The others, which were exclusive and inherited chiefly privileges, were the *ludzista* (Fire Throwers), *winanatł* (Destroyers)[2], and *xgedet* (Cannibals). All were said to have been acquired from the Bella Bella, and a myth of their origin recorded by Garfield (1939:294-95) provides good characterizations of four of them.

Four men from Kitamaat attempted unsuccessfully to kill a lake monster which they followed to the head of the lake where they saw four houses emerge from the water with bright housefront paintings and cedar-bark rings hung over the doors. A man came from one of the houses. "He started to dance, and the dancing was as of a crazy man, and the movements were those of a lame man. When they saw him dancing as though he were lame they called the dance mi'tła" (*ibid.*:295). From the next house came another man, "dancing with actions crazier than those of the first. He jumped about like a dog, and the song he sang and calls he made sounded like the noises of puppy dogs. The Gitamat called this dance nulem, meaning in Bella Bella, crazy person, in the sense of being possessed by animals, as the Tsimshian speak of one under the influence of the land otter spirit" (*loc. cit.*). The third man's "dance movements were even crazier than the first two, and they recognized from the words of his song that he was a chief. This dance they termed ludzistE; very crazy person, one who goes about destroying at random" (*loc. cit*). Then, "from the fourth house came a man who started to dance and sing in a strange manner. He sang in a tongue unknown to the Gitamat. Suddenly he sprang into the air and in his hands there was a small child which he began to devour" (*loc. cit.*). In another version of the myth recorded by William Beynon (1957, Vol. 3), the men are told that "those of your people whom you thought to be dead are the ones that you hear singing, and it is they that have given you these dances."

In ritual performance, initiation into either the Dancers or Dog Eaters was known as the *hilaxha* ("going to the heavens") stage in power acquisition, and followed one and, preferably two, childhood power strengthenings by the chief's personal power (see 3 below). Each society was headed by a chief in his role as *wihalait* ("great dancer"), who "threw" the initiating power into the novices, who then disappeared through the smoke hole into heaven, there to "acquire wisdom" (Beynon, 1957, Vol. 3). When they returned nude, they were in a wild or possessed state (dancing as if lame or eating dogs) and were kept apart from the uninitiated until ritually tamed, again by the wihalait. In one account, the final act of taming was effected when the chief sucked the back of the initiate and blew what he had removed through the smoke hole (*loc. cit.*). That is, he imitated the actions of a curing shaman removing illness. The initiating chief was liberally compensated both for throwing his power into the initiate and for the taming following the return from heaven. After the hilaxha initiation, the person was called a "made person" as opposed to his or her previous condition as an "ordinary person" (*amget: am* - "serving for"; *-get* "person").

Inherited chiefly initiations also involved ascent into heaven and possession upon return, during which the initiates (depending upon the possessing power) destroyed valuable property, handled and attacked others with fire and excrement, and, in the most extreme and feared form of possession, sought to devour human flesh. In the latter case, the initiates are reported to have satisfied their spiritual hunger with corpses and by taking bites from the arms of women who had been ritually bestowed with the right to be so bitten. All such destructive and frenzied attacks required liberal compensation to the persons who had been the recipients of them and who were themselves always from chiefly families.

3. *Personal power demonstrations*. Part of the intangible wealth of each lineage was a stock of inherited naxnox names that were assumed by its adult members at halait rituals during which the defining characteristic or quality

---

[2] Although the myth characterizes the ludzista as the destroying dance, both Garfield (1939:295) and Tate (in Boas, 1916:55) call this dance the winanatł.

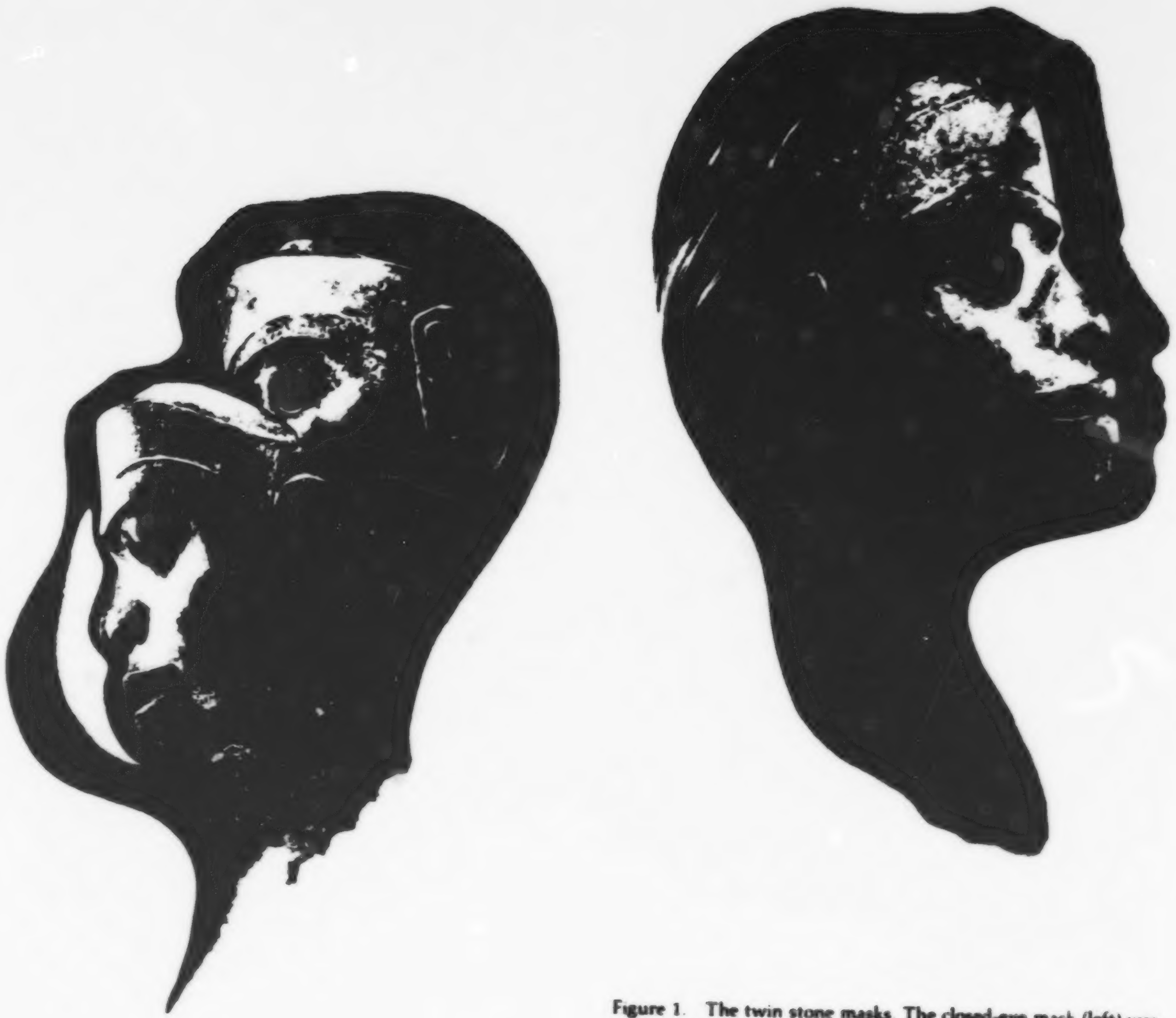


Figure 1. The twin stone masks. The closed-eye mask (left) was collected at "Kit-Katla" by I. W. Powell in 1879. NMC VII-C-329. The open-eye mask (right) was donated by Alphonse Pinart. Said to have been collected at Metlakatla. MH 81.22.1. Drawings based on photographs by Hilary Stewart.

Figure 2. The open-eye stone mask.

of the name was dramatized. These rituals were the only occasions at which masks were worn by the Tsimshian (although occasional references are made in the literature to the wearing of masks in other halait contexts, these are not supported by systematic investigation of masks and their documentation in museums). These names and their dramatizations will be described in detail in the body of this paper, but a special sub-class will be identified here.

3a. *Chiefs' personal power names.* Among the Coast Tsimshian there appears to have been a special kind of wihalait name which contained some reference to heaven (*laxha*) or the sun (*gemk*). In a list of power names belonging to ten chiefs which was recorded by Henry Tate (in Boas, 1916:513), eight of the ten had at least one such name, and some had more than one (there is also reason to believe the list was incomplete). The three examples of wihalait names given by one of Beynon's (1939, Vol. A) informants all contained references to heaven. These names gave the chiefs special and direct access to the power of heaven, whereas the powers acquired by others were mediators between heaven and man, and thus weaker in potency. With direct access to heaven, the chief himself mediated its potency for others. For example, the power First of Heaven was the first power called upon in initiations. The chief bearing the name was asked to "open the powers of heaven for the supernatural beings of these great chiefs" (Tate, in Boas, 1916:557). The chief then came in and danced and shouted to heaven, after which he said "now the supernatural powers of heaven are ready to come down" (*ibid.*:558). The power named Who Was The First To Go Up To Heaven was called upon to "open the sky and to let the power of the sky come down and initiate the chief's children and nephews" (*ibid.*:555).

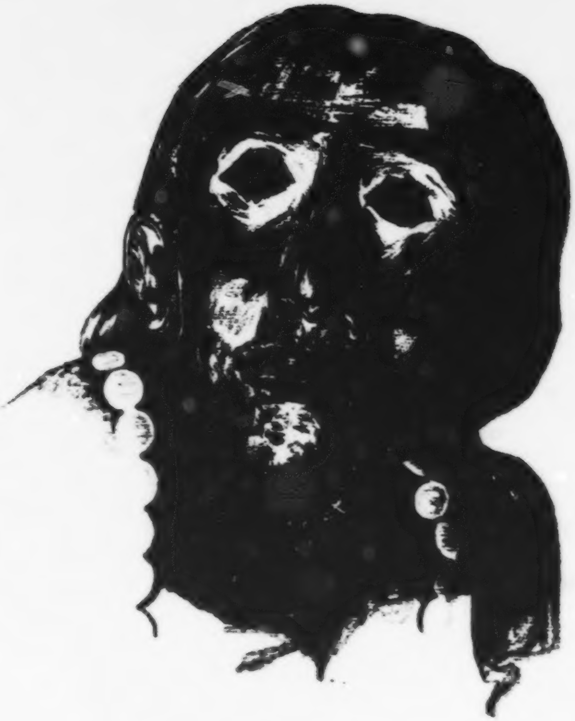
The last reference is probably to the two strengthening power acquisitions of children, during which the chief threw his power into them in order to prepare them for their own ascent to heaven in the hilaxha or third stage of power acquisition. The first strengthening was called the *t'sik* (possibly meaning "dentalium"); the second was called *semhalait* ("real" halait). During these halaits, the children were hidden under (protected by?) cedar-bark mats and taught to cry as if "expressing pain from the power which had entered them" (Garfield, 1939:300). Most recorded accounts of t'sik and semhalait mention chiefs as having "heaven" power names, although other powers were used as well (cf., Garfield's accounts, 1939:300-03).

4. *Reception halait.* When the guest chiefs arrived for a potlatch, their host performed a peace dance, or *limga'awa* ("to catch") (Beynon, 1956, Vol. 1). In this dance, he wore a frontlet headdress from which he shook eagle down on his guests; "if it was not done the guests could and would expect treachery" (*loc. cit.*). Barbeau (1951:135-36) recorded a song sung by a chief at such a reception. It included the following striking references to his relationship to heaven (the sky):

> Who will pursue me into the sky. . . . Are you trying to bring dow the pillars of the sky? Who will follow me through the hole in the sky into the bright mirage beyond? When they see my footprints white as those of the Raven (in the snow), they will try to imitate me.

5. *Chief's power demonstration.* Chiefs were described a engaging in halait rivalry to demonstrate their superio power. The most spectacular such demonstration wa staged by Legaic, the ranking chief among the Coas Tsimshian, whose purpose was to "show the gitxala tha I have greater halait powers that they" (Beynon, 1956-57 Vol. 2). He found a slave among the Chilkat who was hi double, and his people paraded the man as Legaic whil the real chief went into hiding. Finally, the halait seaso arrived "when all the chiefs showed their halait powers t all the others" (*loc. cit.*) and the Kitkatla and other gues were invited to Legaic's halait. In front of the guests, th double was cremated. His ashes were placed in a box ove which Legaic's people sang and from which he finall arose, restored to life (see also Garfield's 1939:21 account of the return to life of another chief).

The preceding abbreviated descriptions of the kinds Tsimshian halait permit formulation of the relationship between sources and manifestations of power, which i turn permit tentative formulation of its nature. Tw basic sources of power can be identified as *chiefly* an *shamanic*. The source of chiefly power is the "brigh mirage" of heaven which is reached through a hole in th sky (= smoke hole in the house). It can be opened b certain chiefs who receive its power directly and "throw it into others. Once strengthened by mediated chief powers, ordinary persons can themselves be throw through the opening into heaven to acquire wisdom enlightenment) from its denizens and achieve full h manity (becoming human + divine) as "made person (chiefs are called *semoiget* or "real persons"). The dire encounter with heavenly beings is, however, too stro for humans who become overwhelmed or possessed their power. This state of divine possession caus humans to become "ill" (lame, crazy). The illness can conceptualized as an excess of power. (It is said to similar to non-ritual possession by land otters, which Tsimshian belief causes insanity and death to no shamans.) The excess power is removed by the initiati



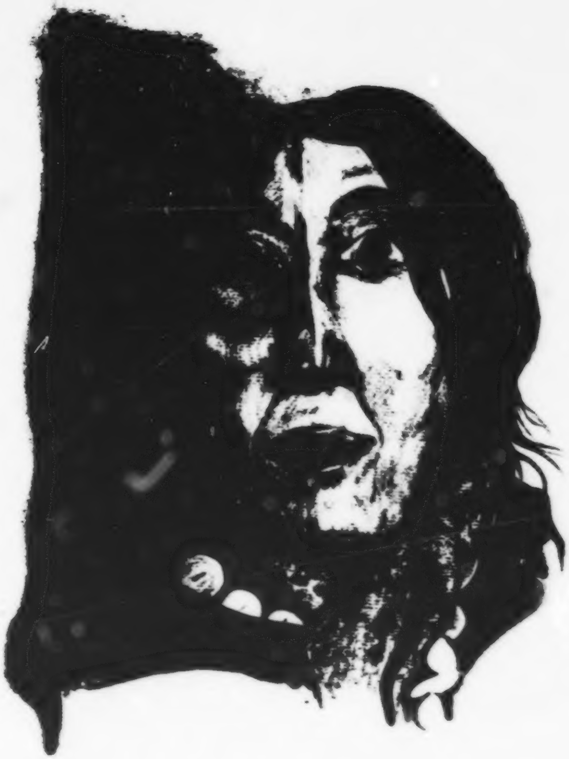


Figure 3. White Man mask. Collected at Greenville, Nass River, by C. F. Newcombe in 1912. PM 1517.

Figure 4. Slave Woman mask. Collected at Kisgegas by C. M. Barbeau in 1927. ROM HN-757.

chief who sucks it out of the person and blows it back to heaven through the smoke hole (i.e., he acts in the fashion of a curing shaman). The initiated person is then "healed" and restored to normal human condition.

Certain chiefs can ascend to heaven for encounters with even stronger possessing powers and return with such an excess of divinity that they are extremely dangerous to both property and other humans: throwing fire and excrement, destroying wealth, and ultimately seeking to devour their fellow men (significantly, they are appeased by taking bites out of women). In the words of the myth, they become "very crazy." Goldman's (1975:191) interpretation that the man eating power is the great devourer Death itself, is the obvious one for such an extreme religious action.

Shamanic power is acquired unsought and outside the ritual framework through possession by animals which causes "temporary" death. Through the ancient medical formula that to cure one must be cured, the shaman reverses his own power encounter, moving back from illness to health, and death to life. Non-shamans can endure power illness, but only shamans can endure power death. In the greatest chiefly power demonstration recorded for the Tsimshian, Legaic simulated the same ability to reverse his own death. Comparison of shamanic and chiefly power sources and manifestations leads us directly to the equation that animals are themselves divine, or that the ultimate source of power is cosmic nature itself. Then, encapsulating a more lengthy argument than can be made here, we might conclude that it is through transcendance of his normal cultural condition by direct encounter with and possession by his animal / divine *nature* (i.e., his own death) that man achieves enlightenment and power. In typically Northwest Coast fashion, this process for non-shamans required expenditures of wealth and was expressed through the use of art and artifacts.

Halait Art and Artists

Ritual halait performances were arranged and managed by a council to the chief known as the *gitsontk* ("people secluded").[3] They are described by Garfield (1939:304) as "the professional group of artists, song composers and organizers of the dramatizations [who] were all men who had received supernatural powers. . . . The ability to carve, plan and operate novel mechanical masks or other objects, or compose songs was considered a manifestation of the powers which the individual had received." Thus, although the use of masks and mechanical devices to manifest power was indeed theatrical simulation through artifice or "trickery," the ability to manifest the simulation was *itself* a manifestation of power. Barbeau (1950: 789) wrote that

> The Gitsontk were specially trained for their secret calling. If any outsider unexpectedly came upon them while they were at work, the only outcome was death for the intruder. The Gitsontk also had charge of manipulating the spirit when it was brought out in a public ceremony. No mistake could be tolerated, and the penalty for any lapse was the same.

Not only was death required of an intruder, or one who might expose the illusions of the gitsontk as human trickery, if their devices failed (thus also exposing trickery), death was also required of the gitsontk. Beynon (1947-48) recorded a spectacular failure as an example that "any misuse of the halait powers was punishable by death." A woman chief who was going to the heavens for power asked her gitsontk group to arrange her return upon a mechanical whale. The gitsontk constructed a whale from sea-lion skins which was made to dive and swim by means of ropes pulled from each end by men hidden on shore. They also contrived to make the whale spout by using hot stones inside of it to make water turn to steam which emerged from the whale's blow hole. When, during its performance, one of the hot stones was dropped and burnt through the whale's skin causing it to sink, all of the attending halait and the gitsontk committed suicide in the knowledge that they would be put to death for the failure. Soon after the warrior halait from Bella Bella arrived to so punish the offenders.

The burden of creating illusion was heavy indeed.

Power also resided in the objects made by the gitsontk. Boas (1916:514) reported that "masks and carvings [used in halait] were kept strictly hidden from those who were not entitled to use them. They were only exhibited at ceremonies." Henry Tate (in Boas, *ibid.*:555) said of a mask named Boiling Words that "it was considered a very terrible object" and that "it was a very terror among the common people, and it was a great cause of pride among the princes and princesses to be allowed to touch it." For the contemporary Gitksan, Adams (1973:43) reports as follows:

> Dancing masks, especially, contain great supernatural power and can make people both in and out of "its" lineage ill. Native tourist guides at the Skeena Treasure House in Hazelton, for instance, complained of aches and pains which "must be caused by a mask because of something (that the guides) said about it which wasn't quite right."

---

[3] Beynon (1956-57, Vol. 2) says that "literally this means an inner chamber or secret chamber to which only members of the particular group are permitted entrance. Each chief had such a particular group and also such a chamber in his house in which the secret conferences were held."

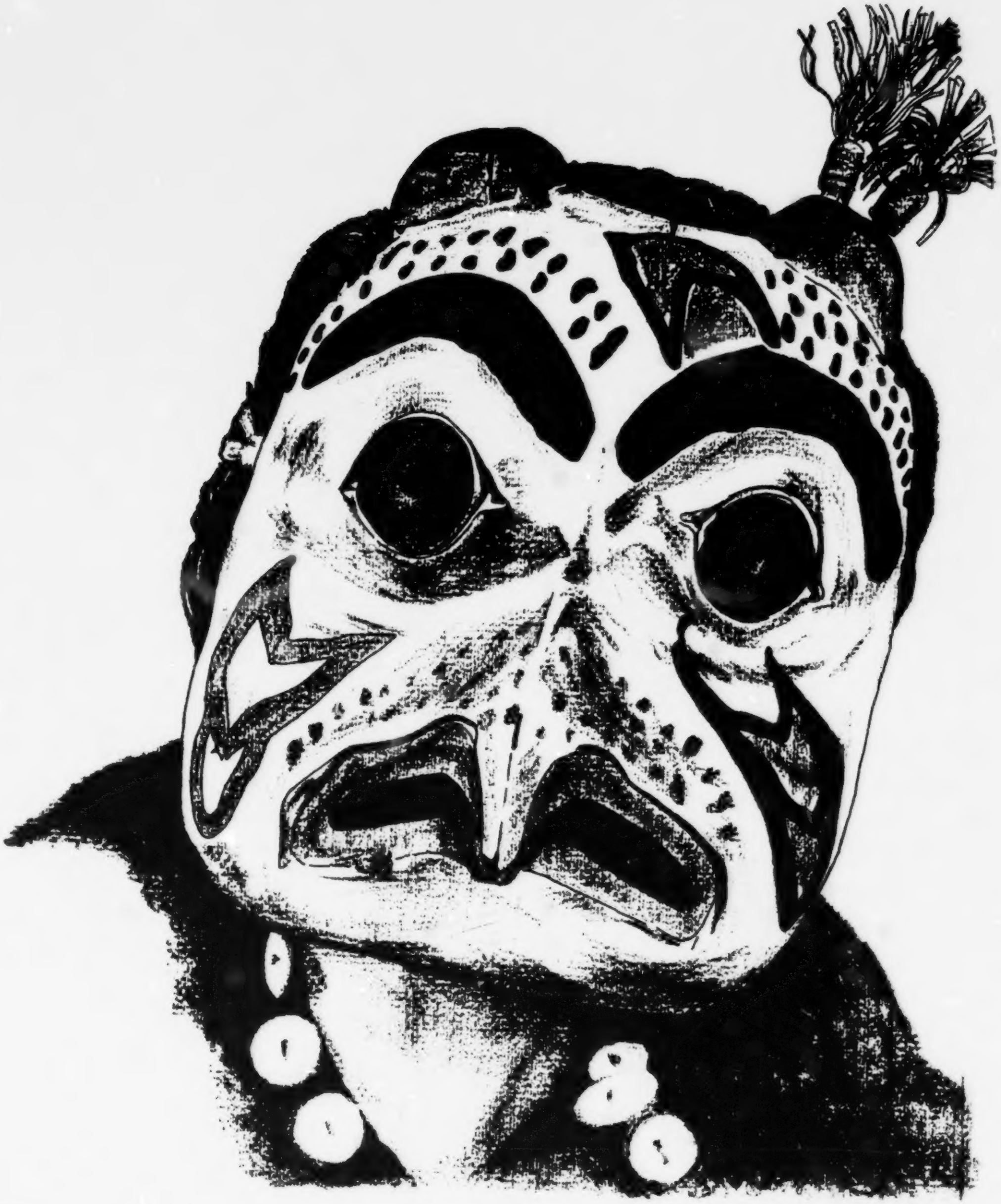


Figure 5. Owl mask. Collected at Kisgegas by C. M. Barbeau in 1920. NMC VII-C-744.

The suggestion is, of course, that once created by the powerful artists of the gitsontk, masks and other halait objects *became* naxnox or beings of power themselves. Unfortunately, I know of no further ethnographic elaboration of this point. But perhaps ethnography is not needed for those who are sensitive to these things. Speaking of the carved stone images he and Hilary Stewart assembled from museum storerooms and other hidden places into one exhibition, Wilson wrote that "the accumulated power that these have held should surely blow the mind. It is perhaps a mercy that we glimpse their meanings only faintly" (Duff, 1975:24).

The Data

The primary data used in this paper are unpublished field notes of Marius Barbeau and William Beynon, his Tsimshian associate, collected between 1914 and 1957. They are preserved in the National Museum of Man of the National Museums of Canada. These have been augmented by museum pieces and their documentation collected by Barbeau, G. T. Emmons, C. F. Newcombe, and I. W. Powell between ca. 1879 and 1929.[4] These data establish unequivocally that the Tsimshian wore masks in the ritual dramatization of naxnox names.[5] Barbeau and Beynon recorded some 650 names from all three divisions of the Tsimshian (Coast Tsimshian, Niska, Gitksan), although those from the Gitksan are the most numerous.[6] In a number of instances, they also recorded brief descriptions of how the names were dramatized, including some sixty cases in which masks were specifically mentioned (in only two cases did the informant specify that no mask was worn in the dramatization). Additionally, Barbeau collected data about naxnox name dramatizations for most of the masks he acquired for the National Museums of Canada and the Royal Ontario Museum. In those instances where either museum collectors recorded the names of the masks they acquired, or details about the performances in which they were worn, these names or performances can be either matched with naxnox names recorded independently by Barbeau and Beynon, or the names of the masks can at least be seen as congruous with the general nature of the naxnox naming system. Finally, Beynon (1945) recorded an eyewitness account of some two dozen masked naxnox name dramatizations performed in connection with potlatches held at Kitsegukla.

That the stone masks were used in the same ritual as described in this paper is an assumption that probably cannot now be "proved." It is, however, not too audacious an assumption, and one that Wilson shared.[7] The stone masks were collected, without supporting documentation as to their use, in 1879 at Kitkatla (the "blind" mask) and prior to 1897 at either Metlakatla or on the Nass River (the "sighted" mask; see Duff, 1975:164, 188). The ritual process described below is the only context within which masks are known ethnographically to have been worn by Tsimshian-speaking peoples and it is similar to the masked performances witnessed in 1792 by Jacinto Caamaño and his men, who were probably the first white observers of Tsimshian ritual (Wagner and Newcombe, 1938). The stone masks could have been heirlooms kept from the time of some earlier and different masked ritual, but their congruence with documented museum pieces will, I hope, prove obvious enough that their placement within the same ritual context is convincing.

Naxnox Names and the Wearing of Masks

Naxnox names were owned by "houses" (corporate matrilineages) and assumed by their adult members, after which they were often used as regular names. Not all adult names were naxnox, although my impression is that most were (the various naming options available to the Tsimshian have not yet been well described). Duff (1964:68) was of the opinion that naxnox names "are somewhat more common among the Gitksan than the other divisions." One Coast Tsimshian informant said that they were not as a rule adopted as regular names by members of the "royal houses" (which comprised an upper status level), implying that they were so adopted by members of the *lekagiget* (middle status level) of this division (Barbeau and Beynon, 1914-1957). The lower

---

[4] Museum initials used in referring to masks in the figure captions and the body of the paper are as follows: NMC (National Museums of Canada), ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), PM (British Columbia Provincial Museum), FM (Field Museum), MAI (Museum of the American Indian), PMH (Peabody Museum, Harvard), CM (Centennial Museum, Vancouver), and MH (Musée de l'Homme).

[5] The naxnox naming system was briefly characterized by Duff (1964:68-69) in his description of the Barbeau/ Beynon field notes. More recently, J. Adams (1973:41-47) has presented some data from these field notes in which several naxnox performances are described. He does not, however, deal explicitly with the naxnox/mask relationship, nor does he describe the naxnox system in the detail required to understand this relationship. Naxnox masks are briefly mentioned in Guédon and MacDonald (1972). I have also described the naxnox system in my unpublished doctoral dissertation (Halpin, 1973).

[6] The names and other information related to them (details of performances, owners, etc.) were extracted from Wilson Duff's copies of the field notes and put on 3" x 5" cards. Prescise locations in the original field notes were not recorded. I am especially grateful to Wilson for having made these notes available to me.

[7] "My best guess is that they were worn by a single performer in the winter rituals known as 'halait' (sacred), and were secretly switched, in the blinking of an eye, to demonstrate a kind of power that logic alone finds incredible" (Duff, 1975:164).

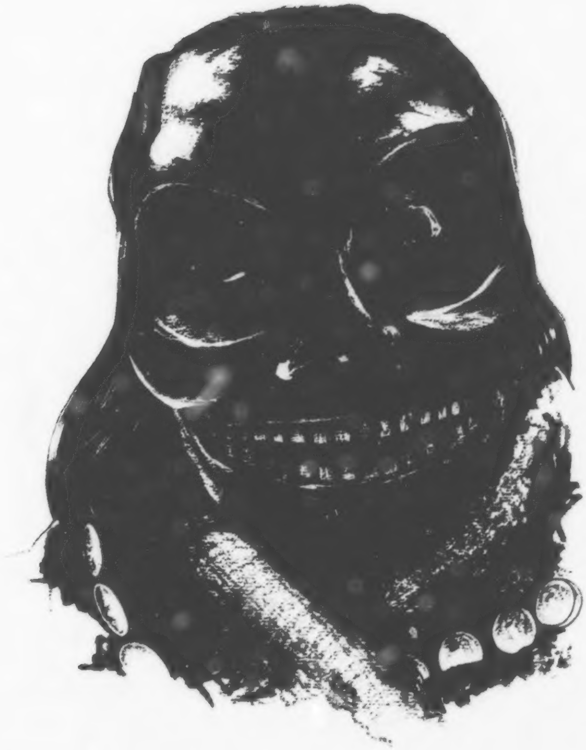


Figure 6. Bear Man mask. Collected at Kispiox by G. T. Emmons *ca*. 1916. MAI 5/5027.

Figure 7. Land Otter Woman mask. Bossom collection (probably collected by G. T. Emmons *ca*. 1900-1910). NMC VII-C-1778.

status level was composed of persons who, by definition, had not ritually assumed honoured names. Neither myths nor other details about how the names were originally acquired have been recorded.

Naxnox names were dramatized when they were assumed and thereafter as demonstrations of the spiritual wealth of the lineage (and of its corresponding material wealth as well, since wealth was required to stage the dramatization). They were dramatized in halait rituals held in the potlatch context but, significantly, *before* the actual potlatch itself took place. That is, naxnox dramatizations were performed for and by the guests invited to a potlatch, but they were performed in the days and nights preceding potlatch speeches and distributions which both created and celebrated what might be called the normal social order. This halait-before-potlatch sequence is clearly established for the Coast Tsimshian by Tate (in Boas, 1916:539-41) and for the Gitksan by Beynon (1945); presumably it obtained among the Niska as well. Held thus back-to-back, naxnox halait and potlatch were conceptually distinct, opposed ritual events. It will be argued later that the naxnox halait created a ritual chaos or topsy-turvydom which required the subsequent balancing order or structure of the potlatch.

Naxnox dramatizations ranged from the simple to the spectacular, depending apparently upon the rank of the owner and the wealth he could invest in a performance. Henry Tate (in Boas, 1916:556) describes a remarkable performance of the name Crack of Heaven, owned by Legaic, highest ranking chief of the Coast Tsimshian.[*] It was dramatized by a transformation mask in which an outside face opened four times to reveal an inside face. The fourth time the mask opened "it makes the large house crack. One side of the large house moves backward from the other. It goes with the half of the large fire, and the whole congregation is still sitting on both sides. The roof is assunder, and the large beams go backward. This is the great wonderful enchantment among these chiefs in the Tsimshian nation." Then the mask closed again, the house came slowly together.

Most recorded naxnox dramatizations were simple impersonations, in which the performer, often assisted by attendants and a chorus, impersonated the being signified by his or her name (chiefs sometimes hired others to perform for them). Each naxnox had an associated song or "breath" (*ksenelk*) that was sung, and whistles, representing the voice of the naxnox, were blown. The entire performance consisted of establishing the identity of the naxnox. There was an element of suspense as to whom the being was until the master of ceremonies announced the name that was being dramatized.[*]

Other naxnox performances involved the interaction of the performer and the chiefs in the audience. In some, the performer struck, clawed, insulted, or otherwise abused the visiting chiefs, who were then compensated. For example, several performances have been described in which the performers used trick knives with receding blades to stab the chiefs. In these dramatizations the performers are treated by the attendants as highly dangerous beings. In others, which were called *sedulsa* ("to restore life") naxnox, the performer died, or was killed (or killed someone else) and the chiefs were called upon, one at a time, to try and restore the body to life, until the last one succeeded. The chiefs dramatized (called upon) the powers of their own naxnox and sang their associated songs, or performed in the manner of a curing shaman over the body. They were compensated for their performances. In his account of one such performance at Kitsegukla, Beynon (1945, Vol II:20) reports that "many of the spectators thought it was a real murder and many of the children and women started weeping and there was some terror among some of the people."

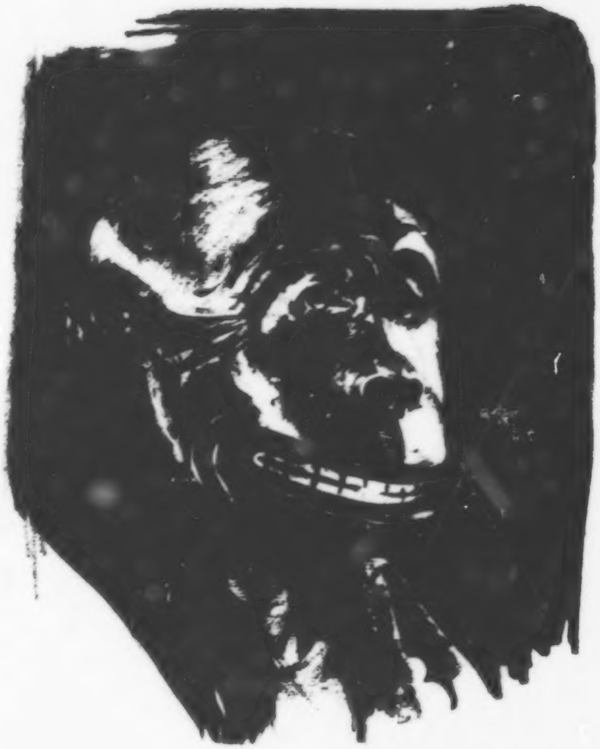
The names themselves do not seem to fall into any kind of native taxonomy, but constitute a single class or category of power beings. It is, however, useful to separate them into loose and arbitrary categories for purposes of discussion. The most obvious categories are those of human and animal. Well over seventy per cent of the names recorded by Barbeau and Beynon refer to human attributes and actions. This is paralleled by the preponderance of human face masks attributed to the Tsimshian in museum collections.

In some instances, the named attribute refers to kinds of persons, usually foreigners or strangers. Examples of such names are Stranger, Tsetsaut, Bella Bella, White

---

[*] Tate actually said that the Crack of Heaven was "not often shown, only in the house of the great chief LEg.e^{e}x" (Boas, 1916:556). Yet in his list of power names (*ibid.*:513), the name Crack of Heaven is said to belong to Sa^{x}sa^{e}xt, a chief of another clan.

[*] Drucker reports a similar suspense hinging on the revelation of the name of the being being impersonated in Northern Kwakiutl lower ranked dances. Regarding a *kumugwe* performance, he writes: "The attendants have been pretending great terror, because they could not learn what the spirit is. As soon as the master of ceremonies reveals the spirit's name, they become assured, and assume a pompous I-told-you-so attitude" (Drucker, 1940:208). There was also in both naxnox dramatizations and Kwakiutl dances an aspect of what Drucker (*loc. cit.*) calls "buffoonery." However, there is no suggestion in the literature on the Northern Kwakiutl that the spirits involved in these dances were also taken as personal names, nor was the range of spirits involved anywhere near as large as in the naxnox system. Further, those who participated in the Northern Kwakiutl dances were organized into societies and the dancers were initiates who were possessed, disappeared, and returned with supernatural powers, much as in the higher ranked Shaman's Series (Drucker, 1940:202-03). Still, there does seem to be a relationship between the two ritual systems.



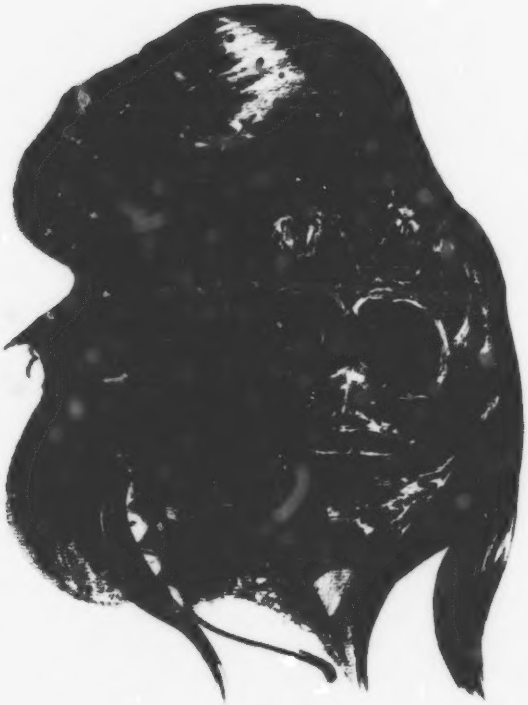


Figure 8. "Monkey" mask. Collected by G. T. Emmons *ca.* 1914. Niska. PMH 85877. Based on photographs by Hillel Burger.

Figure 9. "Monkey" mask. Collected at Gitlaxdamiks by C. M. Barbeau in 1927. ROM HN-687.

Man, Babine, Niska, Tlingit, Man of the Woods, Shaman, Slave.[10] These names sometimes include modifying adjectives, as in the names Stupid Tlingit, Thoughtless Niska, Fighting Like Haidas, Woman Haida, Tsetsaut Warrior. There may have been certain stereotyped ethnic actions used in the dramatizations of these names; for example, Tsetsauts (Athapascans) are consistently reported to carry and shoot bows and arrows. A revealing dramatization of the name White Man was reported by C. F. Newcombe in documenting a White Man mask (Figure 3) collected at Greenville, Nass River, in 1912. He wrote that the performer wearing the mask carried a whiskey bottle from which he poured out drinks for the attending chiefs. When his bottle was empty, a barrel of whiskey was rolled in.

Barbeau collected a mask named Slave Woman from Kisgegas in 1927 (Figure 4). He identified it as a "naxnoq or spirit name," and wrote that it was dramatized as follows. The masked performer, dressed as a woman, came into the feast house and walked around to each chief, begging him to marry her. She was consistently refused. Finally, the master of ceremonies said, "Who would care for you, slave woman. The chiefs despise you," and she disappeared behind the screen at the rear of the house. "Thereafter," wrote Barbeau, "the name belongs to the *man* who has thus dramatized it."

The largest group of naxnox names are those referring to either physical or personality attributes of persons whose rank or cultural identity are not specified. Some examples of names referring to physical attributes are Hermaphrodite, Old Person, Blind, Deaf, Dumb, Dumb Person, Skeleton, Corpse, Big Person, Dying of Hunger, Headache, Spotted Face (from a rash, possibly smallpox), Crippled, Itching (from sores). Some examples of names referring to personality attributes are Selfish, Gluttonous, Proud, Troublesome, Covetous Person, Mannish Woman, Foolish, Thoughtless, Crazy, Careless, Lazy.

Within the entire corpus of 650 names, there is almost no duplication, with the significant exception of one attribute that appears in thirteen names. This is the attribute of *axgot*, which means literally "without mind or heart" (Boas, 1912:280)[11] and which Barbeau and Beynon variously gloss as "thoughtless," "reckless," "crazy," or "foolish." This is clearly the same semantic field as the "crazy," "crazier," "even crazier," progression applied to the powers of the initiation halait in the origin myth summarized above. Barbeau collected a mask of axgot at Kitwanga in 1923 (NMC VII-C-1058) and translated the name "without mind, foolish." In describing the performance, he wrote that the masked performer came out of a large canvas spread at the back of the house and danced and sang before the audience, which sang in response. The song, which was in the Coast Tsimshian language (a prestige language on the Upper Skeena), is as follows:

Performer: I am foolish, I am foolish.
Chorus: The foolish man will eat the heart of all the people.

Barbeau collected another mask from Kitwancool in 1924 named Thoughtless [*axgodem*] Little Slave Woman (NMC VII-C-1177) dramatized by a performer with a trick knife who went around injuring the chiefs and then compensating them. The aggressive and dangerous qualities of axgot are directly reminiscent of the more powerful chiefly initiating powers.

Other naxnox names refer to kinds of human actions, most of them seemingly nonsensical. Examples of these are Always Making Mistakes, Speaking Gruffly, Talking to Oneself, Continually Laughing, Stumbling, Nodding Continuously, Drowsy, Choking While Eating, To Sell Tongue, Selling His Face, Throwing Mud, To Prop Up All Around.

Henry Tate (in Boas, 1916:556-57) describes the naxnox performance of Changing Mind in which a masked performer representing a man stands on the right of the house and a masked performer representing a woman stands on the left side of the house. During the singing of the associated song the name of the naxnox is mentioned, at which point the masks of the two performers change, the man becoming a woman and vice-versa. This happens four times while "the people of the chief's lineage [owning the naxnox] change their faces also. Men have women's faces, and women have men's faces, during the singing. This is the work and power of Lu-na-gisEm gad [Changing Mind]." This naxnox is especially interesting in view of contemporary sex role reversals still practiced on the Nass River. Steven McNeary (pers. comm., 1977) reports that although naxnox dances as such have not been practiced for over sixty years, "funny" dances are still performed at feasts. He writes that the most common practice "is for women to dress like men (hard hat, lunch pail, etc.) and, especially for men to dress like women, usually [wearing] an outrageous getup with lots of makeup. Sometimes the masqueraders wear stockings over their heads, so people have to guess who they are." At one performance witnessed by McNeary, a man wearing a dress went through mock labour pains and "gave birth" to a doll (see the name Snake below).

Most of the animals used as naxnox are not crest animals. They include moose, caribou, porcupine, trout, clam, a number of poorly identified birds, maggots, spider, snake, rat, butterfly, mouse, wolverine, bat, and monkey. Crest animals used as naxnox include bear, wolf, raven, frog, eagle, owl, and mosquito. However, crest animals were owned as naxnox by "houses" which did not have the right to claim them as crests. For example, the naxnox Owl (Figure 5) was owned by a Kisgegas Wolf "house," even though the owl was a crest of the Fireweed clan. That is, the animal naxnox violated normal crest rules.

---

[10] Barbeau and Beynon recorded each name in the native language with an English translation. For the most part, I will use their English translations in this paper.

[11] ax- "without", -got "mind, heart", see Boas, 1912:259, 280; and 1910:328.

Since animal naxnox names were not crests, the animals used must have had other, non-crest, associations which were being expressed in the naxnox context. Data on Tsimshian peoples' beliefs associated with various animals are scanty, but revealing. For example, owl was a common shaman's helper and believed to be a cause of death when it flew over a person's head (Boas, 1916:452). Shamanic death was, of course, animal possession and power acquisition. The naxnox name Part Porcupine was also the name given to children who were born with deformed feet. In other words, the animal naxnox name in this instance connotes the same kind of physical infirmity as do many of the human naxnox names.

Some of the animal naxnox names do not refer to animals in the ordinary sense, but to what might be called *animalized humans*, as in Woman Raven, Black Bear Man, Wolverine Woman, or Mother of Rat. These names were sometimes represented by animal face masks, sometimes by human face masks. For example, a mask of Wolverine Woman (NMC VII-C-1107) collected by Barbeau has an animal face while a Bear Man mask collected by Emmons has a human face (Figure 6). It might be argued that all animal face masks and naxnox names represent animalized humans, insofar as the audience knows that there is a man or woman behind the mask. What these names and performances seem to make especially evident, however, is the idea of man/animal transformation or even simultaneity of being. The Kisgegas name Grizzly Man was said in the Barbeau/Beynon name lists to be dramatized by a performer who wore a whole grizzly skin, but had the face of a man. He was said to alternate walking erect like a man and on all fours like a bear. The transformation involved in dramatizing the name Snake was even more explicit. The masked performer "sat on a platform at the rear of the house, representing a woman in the pains of childbirth. When she arose a snake was seen, as though she had given birth to it, and it was exhibited to the guests" (Barbeau and Beynon, 1914-1957). This performance becomes an even more powerful image of transformation and reversal when we learn that Snake was listed as a man's name.

The meanings of naxnox become even clearer in the naxnox Land Otter Woman, where associations of death, insanity, and human/animal transformations are explicitly conjoined. The Tsimshian word *mawatsxw*, which literally means "like land otter," is consistently glossed as "crazy" (see Boas, 1910:317). While the association between craziness, or insanity, and land otters can be established lexically, contemporary Gitksan have also told me that meeting a Land Otter Person can cause insanity, and that the animal can transform itself into a simulacrum of a relative or loved one to entice its victim. A Kitkatla informant told John Dunn (pers. comm., 1976) that once an otter who appears as a sexually enticing person embraces someone "they go into you and straight to your brain and gnaw away at it so that you become mindless and a were-otter too. You don't live too long after that happens to you. You start acting crazy; then you get sick and die." Boas (1916:345-46) published a Tsimshian myth of the classic northern type that deals with the attempts of the Land Otter People to catch a man who has capsized in his canoe and to transform him into one of themselves. The myth includes an incident in which one of the Land Otters is transformed into a human woman who coaxes the man to eat. The assumption of such myths on the Northwest Coast is that the human who eats the Land Otter's food becomes one of them. They are veritable agents of transformation.

Shamans, on the other hand, are strong enough to use the land otter as a spirit helper. Boas (1897:580) reports that Chief Mountain of the Nass acquired a Land Otter Woman as his shamanic helper (see also Barbeau, 1958: 44-45). He said she was a "beautiful girl" who "wanted to have intercourse with him" (Boas, 1897:580). Beynon interpreted a Gitksan shaman's song about the land otter as meaning that the shaman "became part of the Otter, during his trance" (Barbeau, 1951:122).

There is a mask of Land Otter Woman in the National Museums of Canada (Figure 7) which resembles a human skull. Unfortunately, the relationship between land otters and the human dead is somewhat difficult to establish from the literature, although Gitksan informants have said that the Land Otter People take away the souls of those who have drowned. For both the Tlingit and Haida, however, beliefs associated with land otters are much better reported. Swanton (1908:456) reports for the Tlingit, for example, that "the land otter was dreaded more than any other creature. This was on account of his supposed supernatural powers, fondness for stealing people away, depriving them of their sense, and turning them into land otter men." De Laguna (1972:727-56) devotes a whole section in her recent ethnography of the Yakutat Tlingit to Witches and Land Otter Men, in which she concludes as follows:

> In the last analysis, it would seem that the transformed Land Otter Man (kucda-qa), the "ghost" or revenant of the drowned person (yuk ~ qahe yaqu), the soul of the land otter (kucda-qwani), and the shaman's land otter spirit (kuca yek or kucda qu yek), were all actually or potentially one and the same entity, that which one ordinarily encounters in its animal form or fleshly "clothing" as a land otter (kucda).

For the Tlingit, then, the human dead and the land otter can indeed be considered to be "one and the same entity" as suggested by the Tsimshian mask. Since similar associations are reported from as far south as the Southern Kwakiutl,[12] it seems reasonable to assume that they obtained among the Tsimshian as well.

Obviously related to the Land Otter is a late addition to the naxnox ritual—Monkey. The naxnox name *pa'gwus*, translated as "monkey," was reported for the lower Nass in the Barbeau/Beynon name lists.

Their description of the performance associated with the name sounds very much like descriptions of the land otter: "they had a story that this monkey would confuse their minds and turn them crazy if they met it in the woods. The man using it imitated a regular monkey." The Monkey is confirmed by two Niska "monkey" masks in museum collections. Emmons collected a quite reliable primate mask (Figure 8) which he said represented "a mythical being found in the woods and called today a monkey." Barbeau collected another one (Figure 9) which he said was named *pi'kis* or "monkey" and for which he recorded the following performance:

> The performance of this naxnoq, when the name was assumed began in another house. The performer does not wear the mask at first. But when he comes into the feast house, he begins to act as a monkey, irresponsibly. He throws the headdress of some chiefs into the fire, and it does not matter how costly the misdeed may be to him, as he will have to compensate the owners. The next day he calls the people to his house, wears the mask, with long hair on, and pays for the damage caused on the first day.

Dunn (pers. comm., 1975) has elicited the gloss "monkey" for *bá'wəs* at Kitkatla, Prince Rupert, and Metlakatla, Alaska, although he does not believe the English and Tsimshian words precisely correspond in meaning, i.e., there is a poor semantic fit between them. What bâ'was basically means, he writes, is "creature with the ability to imitate humans." The word bá'was (pa'gwus, pi'kis) is obviously a borrowing from the Kwakiutl word *bukwus* or Man of the Woods (see Rigsby, 1971:154). Boas (1935: 146N) believe the *bukwus* "evidently corresponds to the land-otter spirits of the northern tribes," confirming again the monkey/land otter association. Additionally, both Dunn (*loc. cit.*) and Rigsby (1971:154) were told by different Tsimshian informants that *bá'wəs* was the Sasquatch, a zoologically unverified creature popularly believed by both Indians and non-Indians to be an erect man-ape or a being somehow intermediate between human and animal.

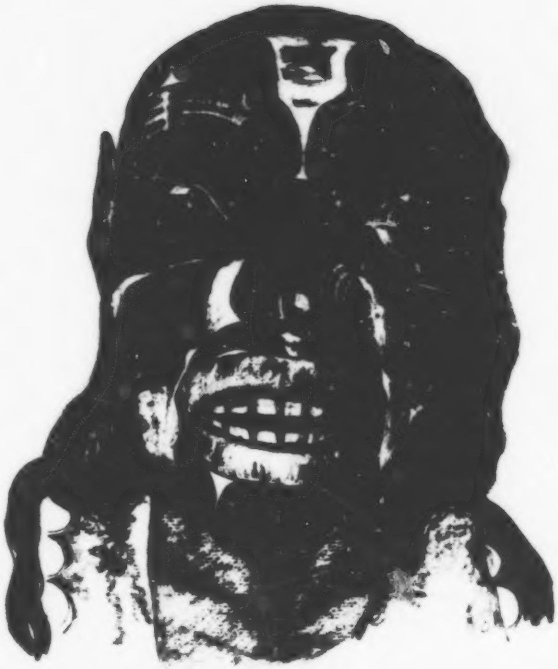
We can perhaps now begin to see in naxnox the nature of the paradox of "whatever 'masking' is about." Naxnox masks are instruments of transformation which turned their wearers inside-out to reveal those attributes of person and action normally denied, especially to those of high status. These attributes, including "foolishness," insanity, physical deformities and infirmities, animality, and death, inhere inescapably in the human condition, most of them in human *nature* rather than *culture*. While some naxnox seem to reveal relatively trivial foibles or misbehaviours, they are as a whole personifications of (1) those behaviours which break the normative rules of Tsimshian culture, and (2) the mortality which all men share with the rest of nature. Naxnox transform chiefs, members of their families, and other high-ranking people, into rule-breakers, foreigners, animals, and the dead—all of which are *outside* the boundaries of Tsimshian culture. This is perhaps most easily seen in the "new" naxnox monkey (and its alternate identity, Sasquatch). This is an animal in the Tsimshian experience which most closely approaches the condition of man without (outside of) culture. The Tsimshian are reported by Barbeau and Beynon to refer to someone who had no honoured name or lineage (e.g., one who was essentially outside the social order) as being "like a wild animal." Also, the land otter, which, previously to the monkey, was probably perceived as the most human-like animal in the Tsimshian environment, was symbolically associated with death and insanity, the two conditions which most ineluctably remove humans from the cultural order.

Anthropological theory provides a relatively simple formulation for explaining the relationship of such boundary transgressions as naxnox and the acquisition of power, which has been most succinctly expressed by Mary Douglas (1966:161):

> The danger which is risked by boundary transgression is power. Those vulnerable margins and those attacking forces which treaten to destroy good order represent the powers inhering in the cosmos. Ritual which can harness these for good is harnessing power indeed.

---

[12] The Southern Kwakiutl Wild Man of the Woods takes away drowned people; whoever accepts his food cannot go back to human habitation; his crew are land otters (Boas, 1935:146). Boas and Hunt (1905:249-70) collected a myth about the Wild Man or *bukwus* in which his stare can drive people "foolish" and his crew of Land Otter People transform into the relatives and loved ones of a man who has nearly drowned and whom they are attempting to transform into one of themselves. In the same myth, the bukwus or Wild Man is said to be Chief of the Dead.



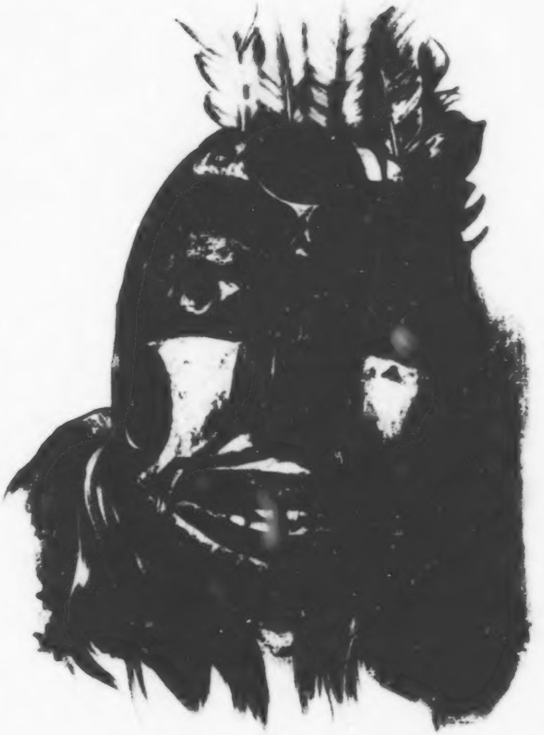


Figure 10. Cold mask. Collected by Mrs. O. Morrison in 1892. FM 18124.

Figure 11. Sleep mask. Collected by Mrs. O. Morrison in 1892. FM 18129.

In this context, it is surely significant that the Coast Tsimshian word for "mask" (*'aak̲* or *g̲aa'ak*; Dunn, 1977: entry 11) means also "mouth," "edge," or "rim." While performing, and freed to do so by the mask and the name which contained both his instructions and his new identity as a boundary transgressor, the lay Tsimshian briefly transcended his culture—although he did not take the risks of a true shamanic journey into the chaos that lay outside those boundaries. His journey was partial and, as it were, charted for him. Furthermore, and this is one of the defining characteristics of all masking, he did not perform alone but in front of an audience, in this case an audience of those with whom he lived and those from whom he wished prestige. Masking is a collective activity, and the audience, seated and dressed according to normal conventions, could participate in the comedy, drama, danger, and power of boundary transgression in the security of knowing (1) that it was ritually sanctioned, and (2) that it was being simulated *for their benefit* by one of their own most respected members.

From this I think we might consider Wilson's decision to quote, at the end of his discussion of the stone masks, what Raven's grandfather said to Raven in one of the Haida creation myths: "I am you. That is you." So also was the naxnox performer to those watching him. When we reveal ourselves with masks, we are all Raven and he is our spectator, laughing at us as we laugh back at him. A cannibal, a trickster, full of cunning and deceit, with voracious appetites for food and sex, Raven is the very embodiment of boundary transgression. He stays permanently in mythtime (although there are stories that he will return again when he is needed), continually transforming and retransforming himself from man to woman to animal and back again. Humans, by domesticating themselves through culture, left mythtime and moved into the present in which they are separate from animals, although retaining (or repressing) animality inside themselves, just as they contain death from the moment of birth. Naxnox, their names and masks, are highly charged but channelled and controlled, eruptions of those same primal energies as constitute Raven himself. When man moved into the time of the present, when he domesticated himself through culture, he lost those primal powers, and must now periodically recharge (or re-cognize) himself through ritual. Masks are indeed simulated faces of wood or, exceptionally, of stone or copper, but they are also the faces of power.

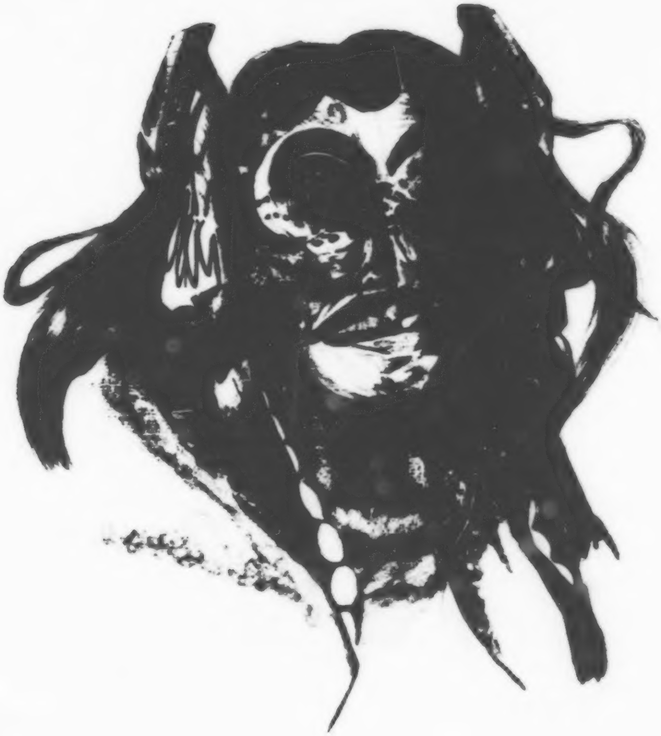
Still to be explored is Wilson's second paradox of "whatever 'seeing' is about," which will bring us back again to the twin stone masks. Fortunately, there are a few descriptions of naxnox performances in which eyes, seeing, and light are defining actions or attributes. I will attempt to demonstrate that these performances are metaphoric of the "vision of a purer kind, eternally open to the inner light," that Wilson (1975:165) saw in the eyes of the twin stone masks.

In myth, light (the condition of sight) was originally the exclusive possession of the Chief of Heaven, and the world and men (who were then frogs) were in darkness (Boas, 1916:62). The primary act from which the present state of the world resulted (and which turned the frogs to stone—thus ending for all time man's natural powers of transformation?) was Raven's theft of daylight from the Chief of Heaven. The most important mythological mediators between heaven and humans are shining youths, usually identified as the Chief of Heaven's son, who appear to humans, usually women whom they take to heaven where they have children who return to earth with special powers (see Boas, 1916:460). In one myth (Boas, 1902:224), a woman married Chief Sun (or Heaven) himself and conceived from his rays, which struck her every morning through a chink in the house. Light is thus a principal attribute of divinity, and implies power and (male) potency.

Light and seeing are direct oppositions to such naxnox qualities as death and darkness, although in a religious sense they may be the same. The relationship can be examined in three open/closed eye naxnox masks. The first (Cold) is a "normal" naxnox in which the negative quality is left unreversed; the second (Sleep) is reversed by the chief; and the third (Broken by the Sun), which was said to be a naxnox but not used as a name, contains a clear statement that "behind" naxnox lies sight, which is liberated by the Sun when it "breaks through" blindness. However, the action of the mask, as will be seen, suggests that the blind/sighted opposition is in process of continual alternation suggestive of simultaneity.

The mask of Cold (Figure 10) with movable eyes and lower jaw, was collected by Mrs. C. Morrison in 1892. She described its performance as follows: "with its teeth chattering and its eyes protruding and rolling, the masked performer went close to the big fire in the centre of the house 'not being afraid of heat' and finally put the fire out with a concealed hose, leaving the house in darkness." In typical naxnox fashion, the condition of darkness was not reversed.

She also collected the mask of Sleep (Figure 11) at the same time. Boas (1897:655-56) described the performance (probably based on information supplied by Mrs. Morrison, but which is more complete than contained in the Field Museum's documentation for the piece) in which the mask first appeared with closed eyes: "then a chief steps up and tries to awaken him by hauling the drowsiness out of him with both his hands. Then the



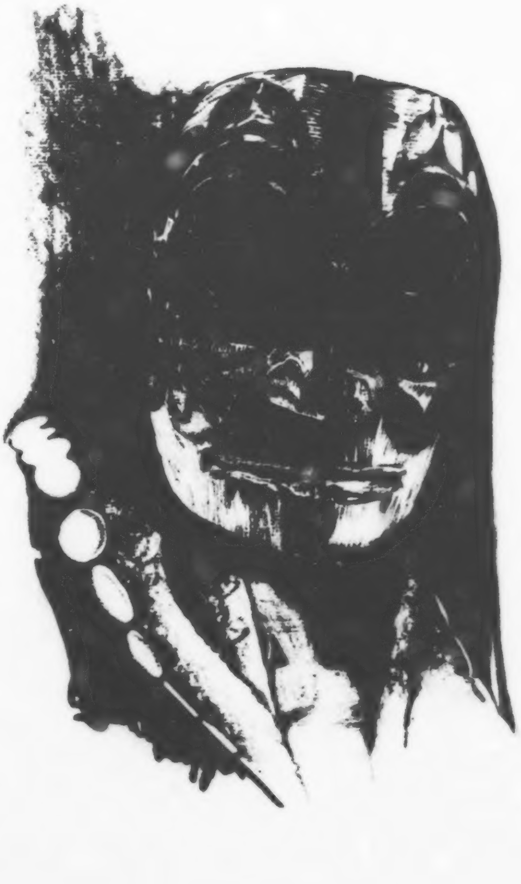


Figure 12. Broken by the Sun mask (closed). Collected at Kitwanga by C. M. Barbeau in 1923. NMC VII-C-1056.

Figure 13. Broken by the Sun mask (open).

eyes of the mask are opened and roll, while the man who wears the mask rises." The chief who took the drowsiness from the mask opened his hands and Sleep then entered the audience, who all closed their eyes. Then he gathered it up again, and the people opened their eyes and sang:

> "Oh, how sleepy we are; oh, how sleepy we are.
> When the heat of the heaven strikes me, drowziness comes upon
> me, brought by the husband of the sleep.
> Oh, how sleepy we are; oh, how sleepy we are" (*ibid.*:656).[13]

The song seems to say that an excess of the heat of heaven causes sleep. What is significant is that the condition is removed by the chief, reminiscent of his removing excess power from novices in the initiation halaits.

The Tsimshian naxnox most relevant to the twin stone masks seems to be an unusual transformation mask (Figures 12 and 13) which reveals, for me, the very essence of the relationship between seeing and masking. The mask was collected by Barbeau at Kitwanga in 1923 and is named Broken (in two) by (rays of) the Sun. It consists of a larger outer human face, highly stylized, and an inner human face, quite realistic. The inside face has blue hair painted on it and a mustache; these are lacking in the outer face. The outer face has the blue (sometimes black) eye band and stylized bird feathers found so often on naxnox masks. The inside halves of the outer mask are also painted with feathers. The eyes of the outer mask are closed; those of the inner mask are open. According to Barbeau's documentation, the being represented by the outer mask is blind. While the performer went around the house "*incessantly* opening and shutting the outer mask," the chorus sang "the sun will shine on me and break through." The mask of Blindness was "broken" by the superior power of the sun to reveal an inner mask of sight. The "incessant" opening and shutting of the mask, however, in which sight and blindness are brought as close together in time as possible, suggests simultaneity and perhaps the logical similarity in opposition that Wilson kept talking about. This, I suggest, is that same similarity more directly visually stated by the twin stone masks, which are alike in every respect, even to seemingly random scratches, except for their "eyes."

If we look closely at the twin stone masks, we can see that their "eyes" are not eyes at all. The outer mask has no eyelids to close; the inner mask does not have typical Northwest Coast eye forms, but rather two perfectly cylindrical openings, as if they had been "bored." And this is perhaps the very metaphor the artist was using when he made the "eyes" that shape. The evidence is light, but convincing. In 1863 the Bishop of Caledonia reported the following statement made by a Christianized Tsimshian shaman:

> I have given up the lucrative position of sorcerer. Been offered bribes to practice my art secretly. I have left all my mistaken ways. *My eyes have been bored (enlightened).* I cry every night when I remember my sins. The great Father Almighty sees everything. (Davis, 1904:61).

The Bishop himself added that word "enlightenment," and we must assume that he received the association from the Indians. A supporting piece of evidence is Swanton's (1908:464) statement that a favourite animal helper of the Tlingit shaman was the woodworm "because it can bore through wood and so typifies strong perception."

Another suggestion that the masks are statements of divine or inner sight can perhaps be found in what Wilson (1975:166) called the "hints of parentage of Frog" that can be read in their lips (when these are compared with the lips of frogs in northern Northwest Coast art). Recalling that men were frogs before Raven brought light and they turned to stone, that hint of frog in those stone lips points back to the theft of light from heaven.

Conclusion

Naxnox which reverse from the negative (blind, asleep, dead) to the positive (sighted, awake, restored to life) are rare in the name lists and other evidence available. When they were presented, they were probably special privileges of high-ranking chiefs. Most naxnox present only a culturally disruptive or endangering image. The performer leaves as he entered; the blind still blind, the crazy still crazy, the slave still a slave. The ritual cosmos remains in topsy-turvydom, the equation incomplete. Anthropological theories of religious symbols instruct us to look for the restoration of structure and order, for some ritual process whereby "socially negative and destructive images and impulses may be domesticated into the service of the social order" (Turner, 1969:21). The answer is prefigured in the speech by a Tlingit chief who is to erect a totem pole. Just at daylight he walks through the village singing songs for the dead. "The memorial pole seems to bring every recollection of the dead back to him" (Swanton, 1909:374). At this time the story of Raven is told and then he makes the following speech:

---

[13] In an earlier publication (1895:577-78), Boas translated the song differently: "Oh! how sleepy we are. Oh! how sleepy we are. Whenever strikes me the heat of heaven, ya! again comes sleep to the husband of sleep, kua! Oh, how sleepy we are. Oh! how sleepy we are." In the first version, sleep *comes to* the husband of sleep; in the second it is *brought* by the husband of sleep. Boas must have felt his second translation to be more accurate, while I prefer the first.

> "My father's brothers, my grandparents, people that I came from, my ancestors, my mother's grandfathers, years ago they say that this world was without daylight. Then one person knew that there was daylight with Raven-at-the-head-of-Nass, and went quickly to his daughter. When he was born he cried for the daylight his grandfather had. Then his grandfather gave it to him. At that time his grandchild brought daylight upon the poor people he had made in the world. He pitied them. *Darkness is upon me. My mind is sick. Therefore I am now begging daylight* from you my grandfathers, my father's brothers, people I came from, my mother's grandfathers. Can it be that you will give daylight to me as Raven-at-the-head-of-the-Nass gave it to his grandchild, so that day will dawn upon me" (*loc. cit*) (italics added).

After the pole is raised, the chief tells the people "You have brought daylight upon me" (*loc. cit*). The erection of a totem pole in honour of one's ancestors was not only the cultural act *par excellence*, it was also a statement of continuity. "The prime role of culture is to ensure the group's existence as a group, and consequently, in this domain as in all others, to replace chance by organization" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969:32).

Thus, naxnox were followed by the potlatch and the erection of totem poles, the celebration of order, the affirmation of social relationships, and the continuity of both culture and lineage. The same chiefs and their retinues participated as had participated in halait, as hosts and guests, but their masks were removed and all the proprieties of rank and position were observed. Whereas in naxnox they had played the sacred game of boundary transgression and power release, in the potlatch they celebrated the boundaries. But they did so in the knowledge that underneath the formality of their roles, opposing the pomp with which they asserted status, was the mask. Or, as Wilson (1975:59) said, "Things are only seen in the mirror of their opposites. We are constantly being reminded that the opposite is equally true."

References

Adams, John W.

1973 The Gitksan Potlatch: Population Flux, Resource Ownership and Reciprocity. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Toronto and Montreal.

Barbeau, Marius

1950 Totem Poles. 2 vols. National Museum of Canada, Bulletin 119, Anthropological Series 30. Ottawa.

1951 Tsimshian Songs. *In* Voila Garfield, et. al., The Tsimshian: Their Arts and Music. Publications of the American Ethnological Society, 18:97-157.

Barbeau, Marius and William Beynon

1914-1957 Unpublished fieldnotes. On deposit in the Centre for the Study of Canadian Folklore, National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Beynon, William

1939-1957 Field Notebooks. On deposit in the Centre for the Study of Canadian Folklore, National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

1945 Skeena Crossing (Gidzagukla). Four field notebooks on deposit in the Centre for the Study of Canadian Folklore, National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Boas, Franz

1895 The Nass River Indians. Report of the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1895:569-83.

1897 The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians. Annual Report of the United States National Museum for 1895:311-738. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

1902 Tsimshian Texts. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 27. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

1910 Tsimshian: An Illustrative Sketch. Handbook of American Indian Languages. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 40, Part 1:283-422. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

1912 Tsimshian Texts (New Series). Publications of the American Ethnological Society, Vol. III, pp. 65-284. Leiden.

1916 Tsimshian Mythology. Thirty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 29-1037. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

1935 Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, 28. New York.

Boas, Franz and George Hunt

1905 Kwakiutl Texts I, Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 5, Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Leiden.

Davis, George T. B.

1904 Metlakahtla: A True Narrative of the Red Man. Facsimile Reprint, 1964, The Storey Book Store, Seattle.

de Laguna, Frederica

1972 Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit. Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, Vol. 7. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

Douglas, Mary

1966 Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Henley.

Drucker, Philip

1940 Kwakiutl Dancing Societies. Anthropological Records, 2(6):201-30. University of California, Berkeley.

Duff, Wilson

1964 Contributions of Marius Barbeau to West Coast Ethnology. Anthropologica, N.S., 6(1):63-96.

1975 *Images Stone B.C.*: Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture. Hancock House, Saanichton.

Dunn, John

1975 Personal Communication.

1976 Personal Communication.

1977 A Practical Dictionary of the Coast Tsimshian Language. Unpublished manuscript.

Garfield, Viola

1939 Tsimshian Clan and Society. University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, 7(3):167-340.

Goldman, Irving

1975 The Mouth of Heaven: An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought. John Wiley, New York and Toronto.

Guédon, Marie-Françoise and George MacDonald

1972 Masks. *In* 'Ksan: Breath of Our Grandfathers:77-79. Archaeology, Ethnology and Communications Divisions of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Halpin, Marjorie Myers

1973 The Tsimshian Crest System: A Study Based on Museum Specimens and the Marius Barbeau and William Beynon Field Notes. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Colubmia.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1969 The Elementary Structures of Kinship. Rev. Ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode. (First published in 1949.)

McNeary, Stephen A.

1977 Personal Communication.

Rigsby, Bruce

1971 Some Pacific Northwest Native Language Names for The Sasquatch Phenomenon. Northwest Anthropological Research Notes, 5(2):153-56.

Swanton, John R.

1908 Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationships of the Tlingit Indians. Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

1909 Tlingit Myths and Texts. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 39. Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

Turner, Victor

1969 The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure. Chicago: Aldine.

Wagner, Henry R. and W. A. Newcombe

1938 The Journal of Jacinto Caamaño, ed. and with intro. and notes by Henry R. Wagner and W. A. Newcombe. The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 189-222; No. 4, pp. 265-301.

MESSAGES

A message, as Wilson tells us in his poem on page 307, is "communcation.... a mutual gift of meaning." In this section are messages in the form of a "gift of sight" in Wilson's memory from some of the foremost Northwest Coast Indian artists. Following the colour prints is a selection of creative writing by and for Wilson, put together by his daughter, Marnie Duff. Phyllis Webb and Donald Abbott assisted in choosing Wilson Duff's poetry for publication. For an excellent discussion of Duff's poetry the reader is referred to Robin Ridington's article, The World is as Sharp as a Knife: Vision and Image in the Work of Wilson Duff *published in B.C. Studies, No. 38, Summer 1975.*

D.N.A.

Mungo Martin: Sea Grizzly Bear 292

This is one of a series of designs which Mungo would work on in Thunderbird Park and periodically bring over to Wilson in our office in the Provincial Museum. There are eleven of them in the Provincial Museum's collection. Another set which Mungo did for the Museum of Anthropology while he was working at the University of British Columbia has been published by Audrey Hawthorn in The Beaver *("Mungo Martin Artist and Craftsman," Summer 1964, pp. 18-23) and in her* Kwakiutl Art *(1979, Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver).*

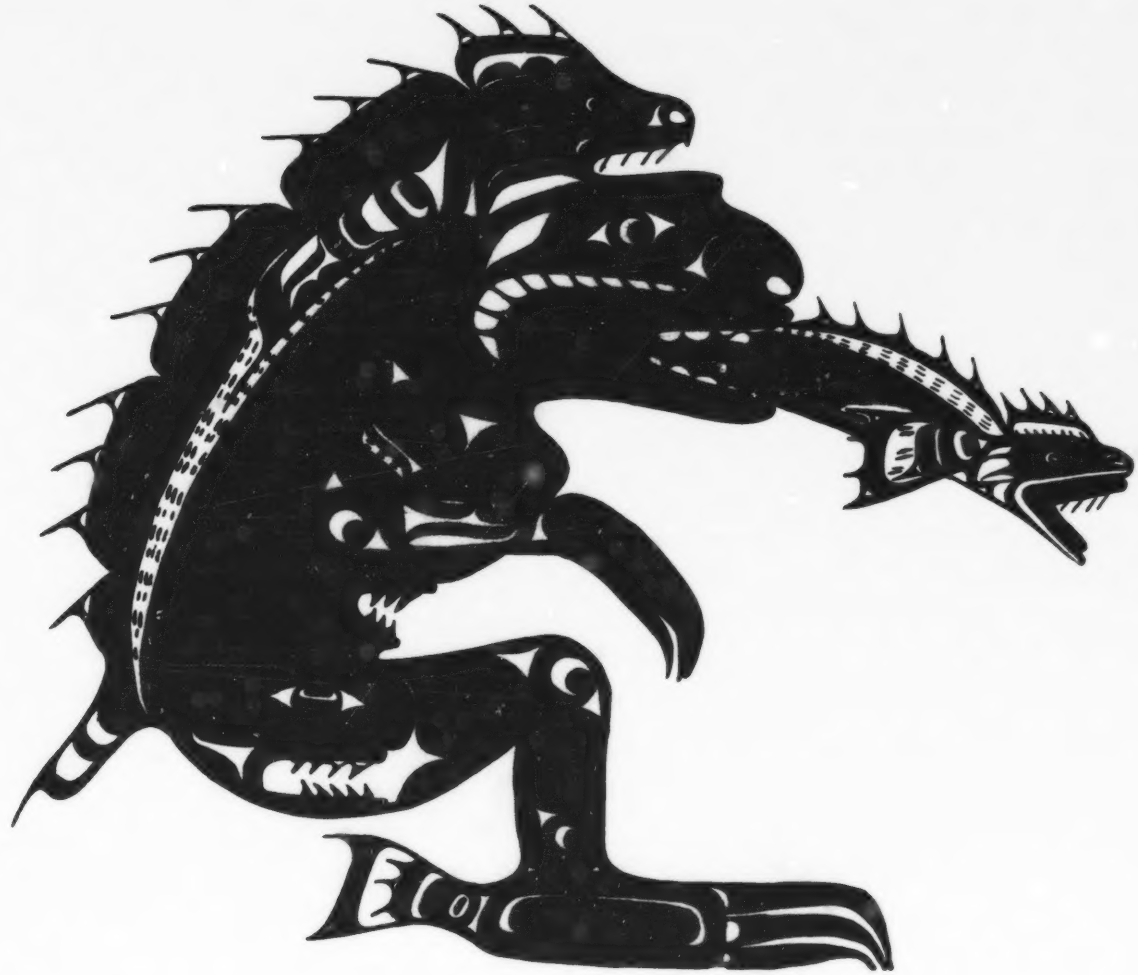
The painting is included because Mungo, if he had not predeceased Wilson, would undoubtedly have wanted to be represented here to honour him. It also illustrates the relationships of Mungo's two-dimensional designs in the recent development of Northwest Coast art prints, particularly those of the Hunts. Mungo himself did not publish prints but executed these designs to be records of this work and to show the variations of Kwakiutl designs. D.N.A.

Roy Vickers: Eagle—Full Circle 293

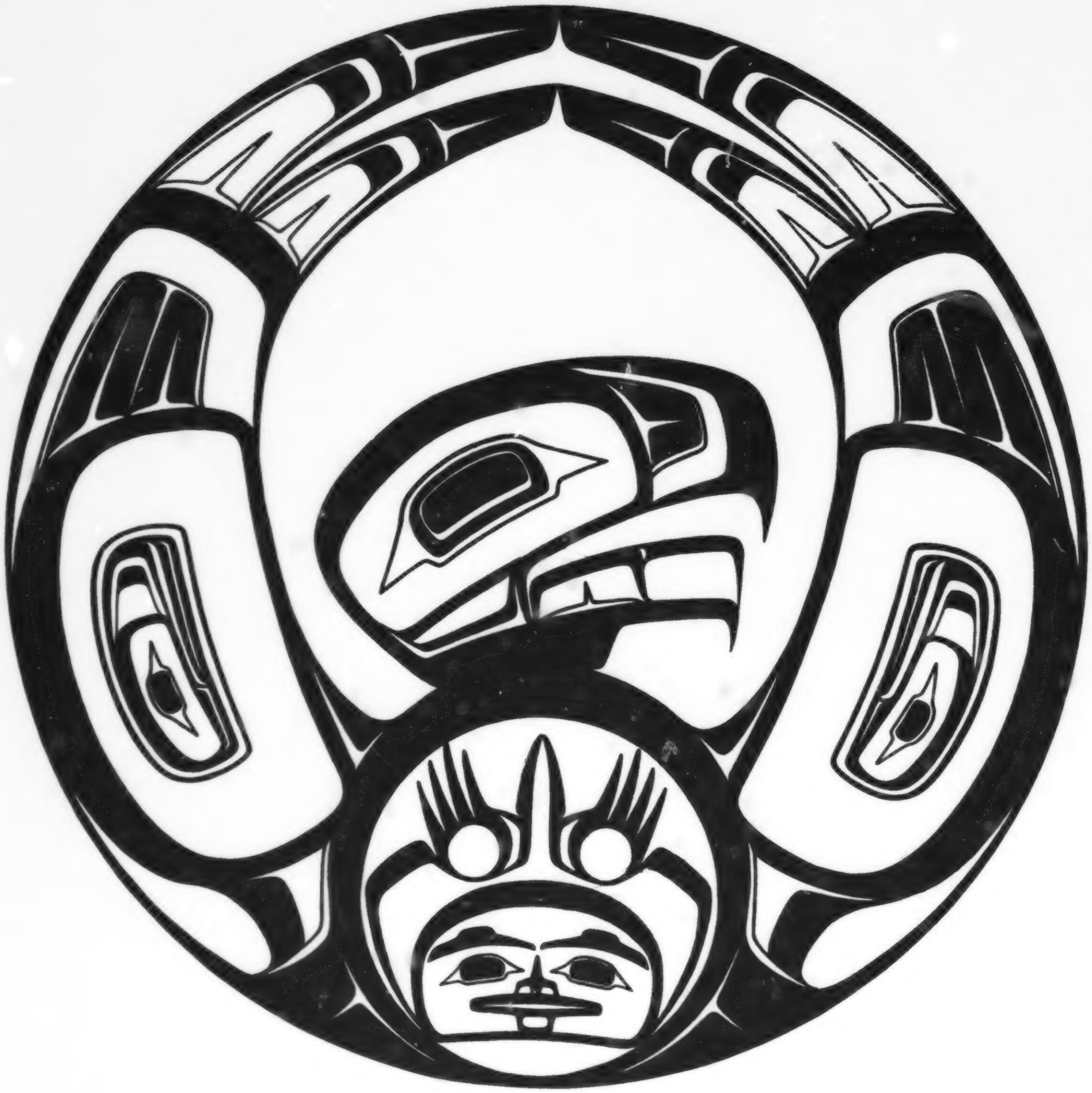
Wilson Duff was an important influence, not only on my development as an artist, but as a person. I had moved with my family from the remote Indian village of Kitkatla, B.C. at the age of eight and met Wilson in Victoria when I was seventeen. Wilson was in the old B.C. Provincial Museum in the Parliament Buildings at the time and on one of my many excursions to the museum to examine images from my past, he took me aside. Through his patience, interest and teaching over the years I have been able to grow as an artist and return to the people of the Northwest Coast with an ever increasing appreciation and pride in a rich and colourful inheritance.

The eagle is my family crest and this particular creation represents the full circle that I have come in my development as a Northwest Coast Indian. The title of this crest is "Eagle - Full Circle"; it is dedicated to the man, Wilson Duff, whose influence was so important.

ROY VICKERS



Sea Grizzly Bear / *Mungo Martin*



Eagle—Full Circle / *Roy Vickers*

Bob Davidson: Mighty Mouse Lives 295

I was visually aware of this creature Wilson calls Mighty Mouse. He verbalized it for me. Wilson had an understanding for Northwest Coast art which was an inspiration. He became my measure of knowledge. When I did a creation I would say, "That'll fool Wilson."

BOB DAVIDSON

Tony Hunt: The Kwa-Gulth Housefront 296/7

I first met Wilson Duff when I arrived in Victoria in 1952 with Mungo, Abaya and Dave Martin. The early years of the restoration program at Thunderbird Park were exciting for me because the program was new and I was in the beginning stages of my apprenticeship under Mungo. Wilson fully understood what Mungo was doing with me and he certainly encouraged him in teaching me the traditional styles and techniques of Kwa-Gulth Art. Wilson also encouraged me in studying the old pieces in storage at the Museum. He gave me the freedom to relax and study the old pieces, doing sketches and taking photographs of them. Because of Wilson's patience in me and his support in my early learning years I am truly grateful to him.

Wilson Duff must be given credit for the assurance of Northwest Coast Indian Art today because had he not given Mungo Martin support in his teaching people like my father Henry Hunt, and me, I think Northwest Coast Indian art would not be where it is today.

The Kwa-Gulth House Front, of my grandfather, Jonathan Hunt, (Southern Kwa-Gulth Thunderbird and Sisiutl) painting that I have submitted for this book is a highlight in my career as an artist, because I utilized many of the design techniques I learned from Mungo's teaching and, I feel, from Wilson's patience and encouragement.

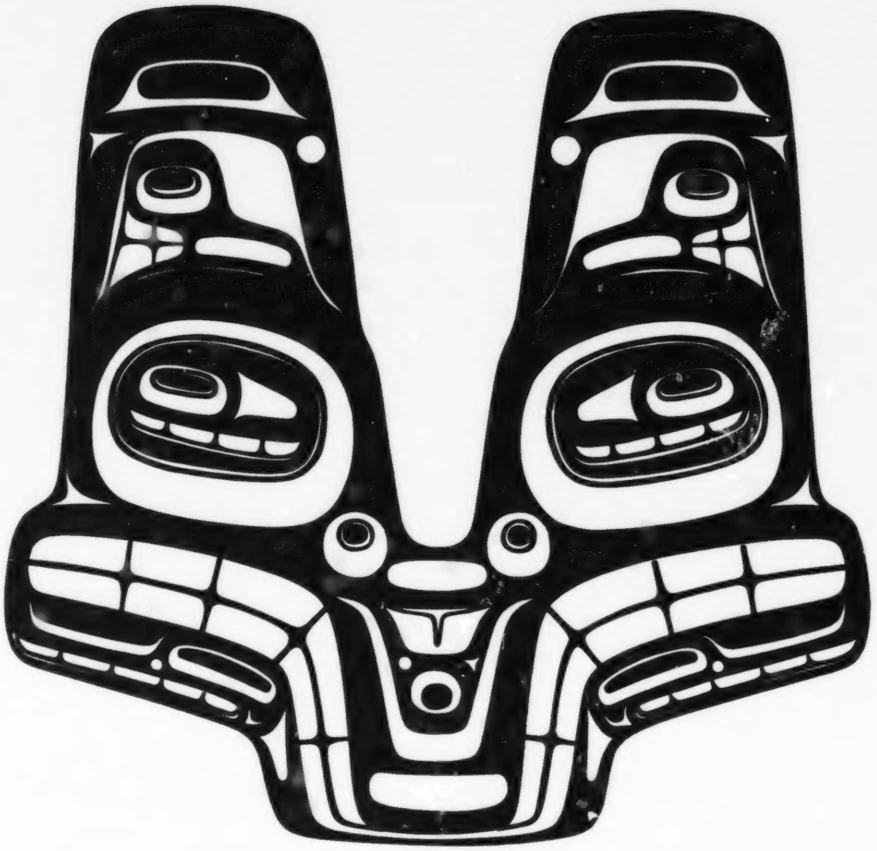
The loss of Wilson as a friend has been deeply felt by members of the Hunt family.

TONY HUNT

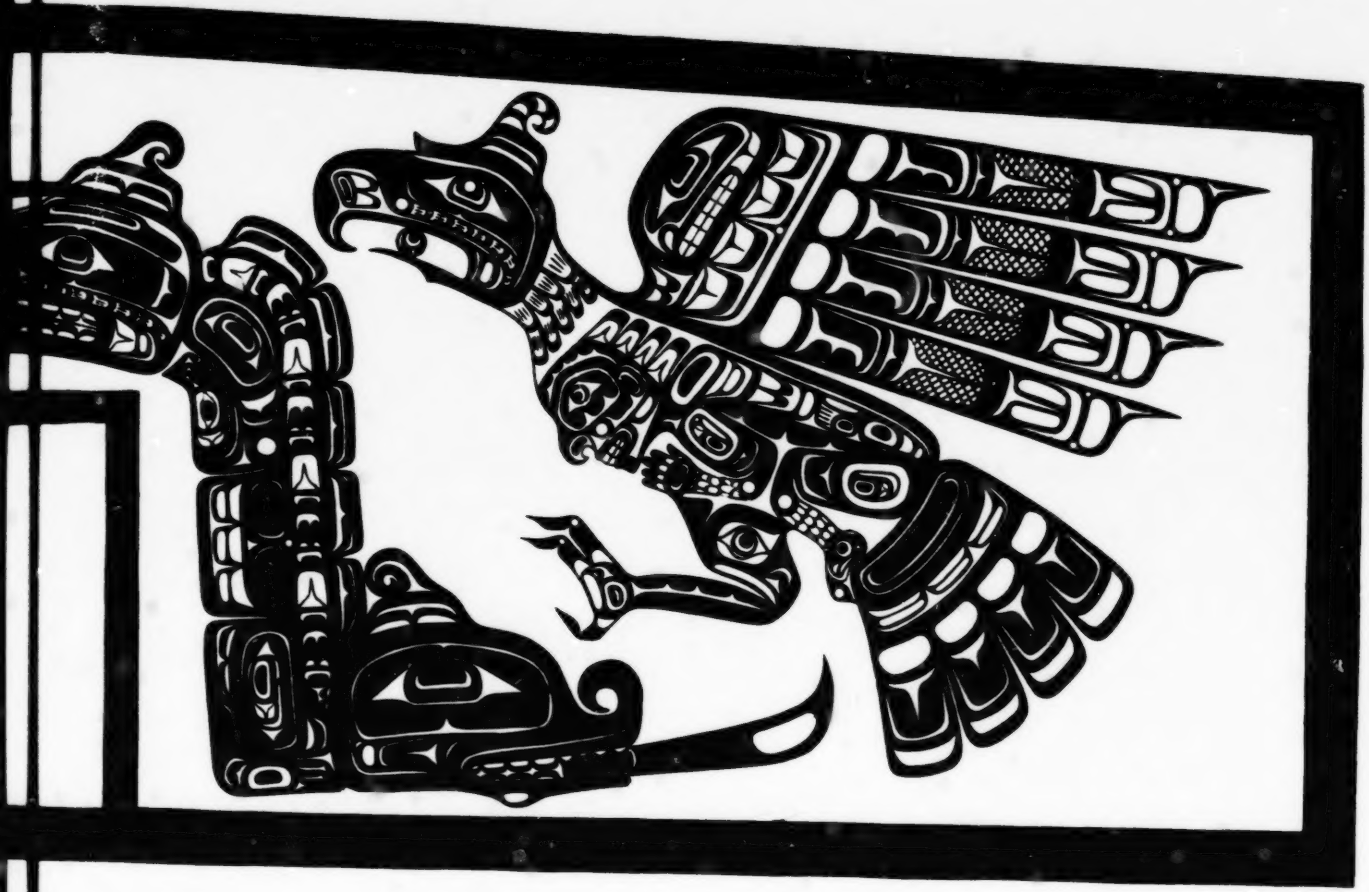
Richard Hunt: Kwa-Gulth Man 298

Kwa-Gulth Man from the Sea; having lunch eating a sea urchin. He holds it very delicately so he doesn't get poked by the urchin's quills. The butt has an octopus with one tentacle representing the tail and the other the penis. The foot of the Man from the sea is represented by a fin. On top of his head is a sculpin waiting for any scraps.

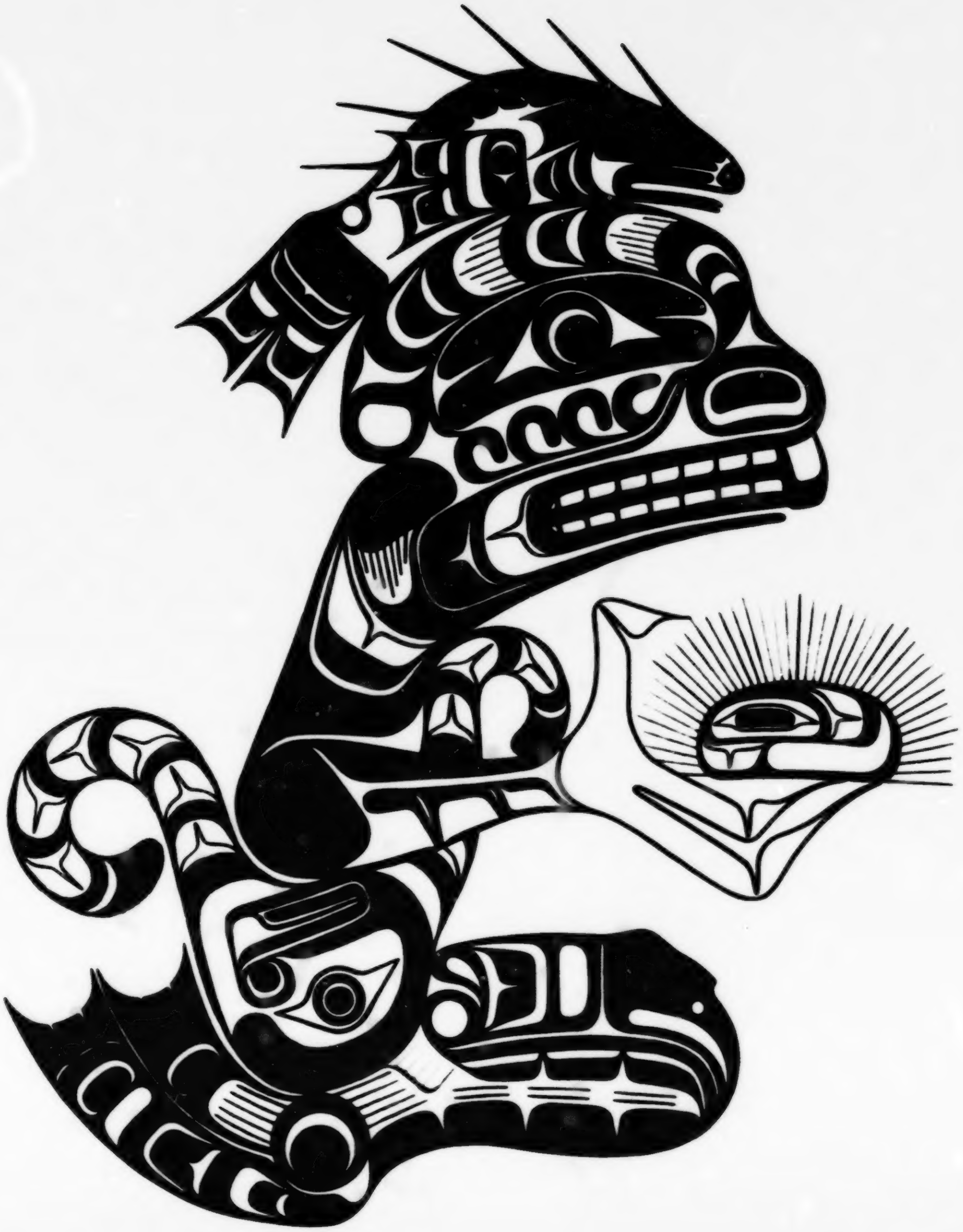
RICHARD HUNT



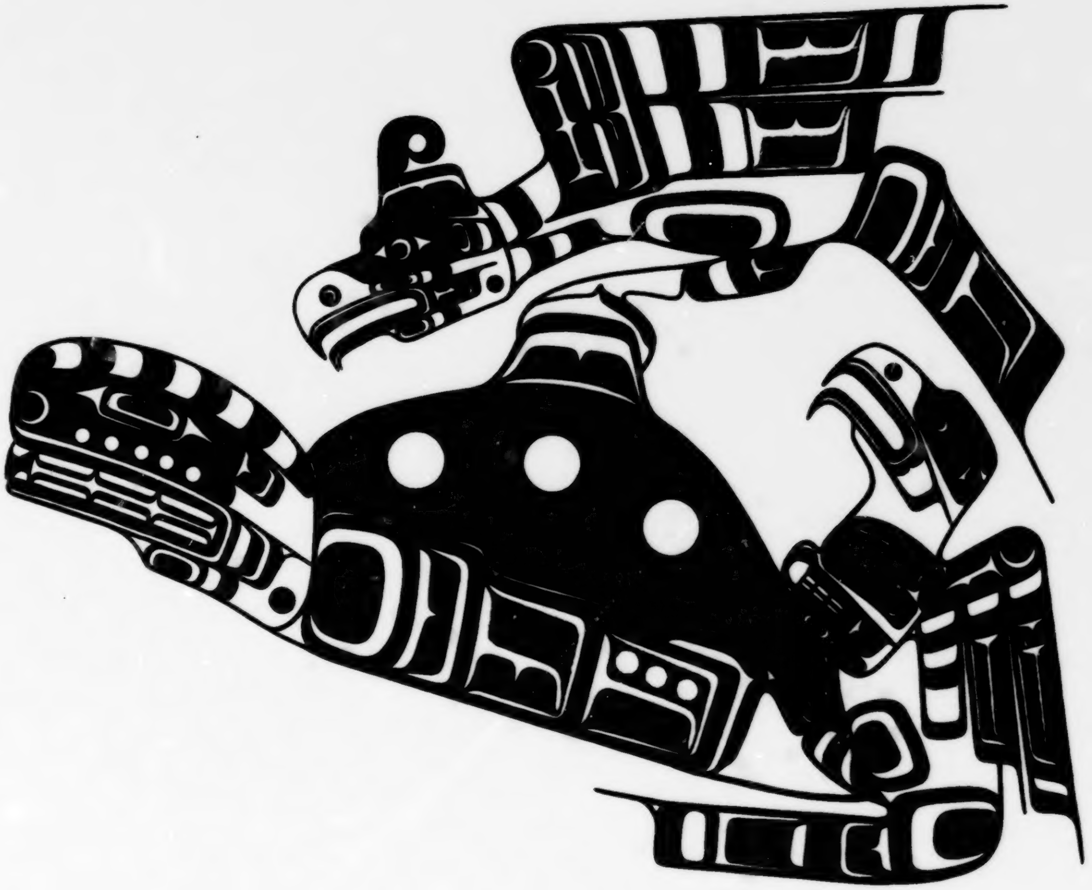
"Mighty Mouse" / *Bob Davidson*



The Kwa-Gulth Housefront of my grandfather / *Tony Hunt*



Kwa-Guith Man / *Richard Hunt*



Thunderbird and Killer Whale / *Henry Hunt*

The Box Painting by the "Master of the Black Field"

Bill Reid

"The Box" A.M.N.H. 19/1233

(Photograph courtesy *Objects of Bright Pride*. Northwest Coast Indian Art from the American Museum of Natural History)

In the last years of his life, Wilson Duff's efforts became more and more directed toward trying to uncover the many layers of meaning which he felt sure lay behind the convoluted, complex surface patterns of Northwest Coast art in all its forms—the structure of the myths, the forms of ancient stone artifacts, the significance of masks. He believed, I think, that this whole sweep of creativity expressing the rich cultures of the coastal peoples reached its apogee in the so-called "Flat Designs" found on carved and painted screens, house fronts, bowls, chests and boxes.

He appears to have considered that the most significant of these designs still existing was found on the sides of a particular bent-corner chest.

I was not closely enough associated with him during this time to have any knowledge or appreciation of his thinking on the meaning of this design. My only role in this investigation, which at times became almost an obsession, was as the intermediary who first brought it to his attention.

This occurred because, as is the case with most of the group who brought about the so called Northwest Coast artistic revival, my early knowledge of the culture was learned, not through contact with the native people but through the writings of the early anthropologists, chiefly Franz Boas. It was in his "Primitive Art", that I first became aware of the existence of this masterpiece whose outstanding qualities were apparent even in the small, inaccurate, unfinished rendering which was illustrated there (Boas, 1955, fig. 287b).

When I was charged, along with Wilson and Bill Holm, with selecting material for the Arts of the Raven exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1967, my first request to the American Museum of Natural History in New York was for this box. It wasn't on display; nobody at the museum had any knowledge of it. Fortunately I had no trouble finding it, completely unprotected, on an open shelf in the grimy attic of the museum which houses so many of the great treasures of the Northwest Coast. Eventually it arrived in Vancouver, a not very large, not particularly well made box, badly worn and covered with greasy dirt through long use, not to mention the layers of New York City atmospheric filth.

At the risk of never being allowed near a museum collection again, I must admit that, unknown to the Art Gallery personnel, I removed a considerable amount of the surface soil, and there, worn and indistinct though parts of it were, was this marvellous design. The next problem was how to draw the attention of the public to this very unimpressive looking worn and weathered little wooden box, covered with indistinct patterns. We decided to build it a little room of its own, with a floor space about three metres square, and walls about 2½ metres high, and to line these walls with reversed, enlarged, photographic images of the sides of the box, each wall reflecting the side of the actual box it faced. The box itself was, of course, placed in the centre of the enclosure.

The pattern on the box was too indistinct to give a good photographic image, so I made a tracing of the design, transferred it, in reverse, to illustration board, and worked it up in the original colours, black and red. These panels were then photographed, and used as outlined above.

The reason for going into all this technical detail is that, although intrigued and excited by the box itself, because it was on display during most of its stay in Vancouver, and had to be returned to New York immediately afterwards, it was my copy of the box design which Wilson eventually used for his studies. Although harsh and glaring in texture and colour when compared to the original, the strident poster colours on a white background instead of old mellowed paint on old, soft, dark, red cedar, were accurate. I made templates for all the essential forms to duplicate the wonderful accuracy of the painted lines found on the box.

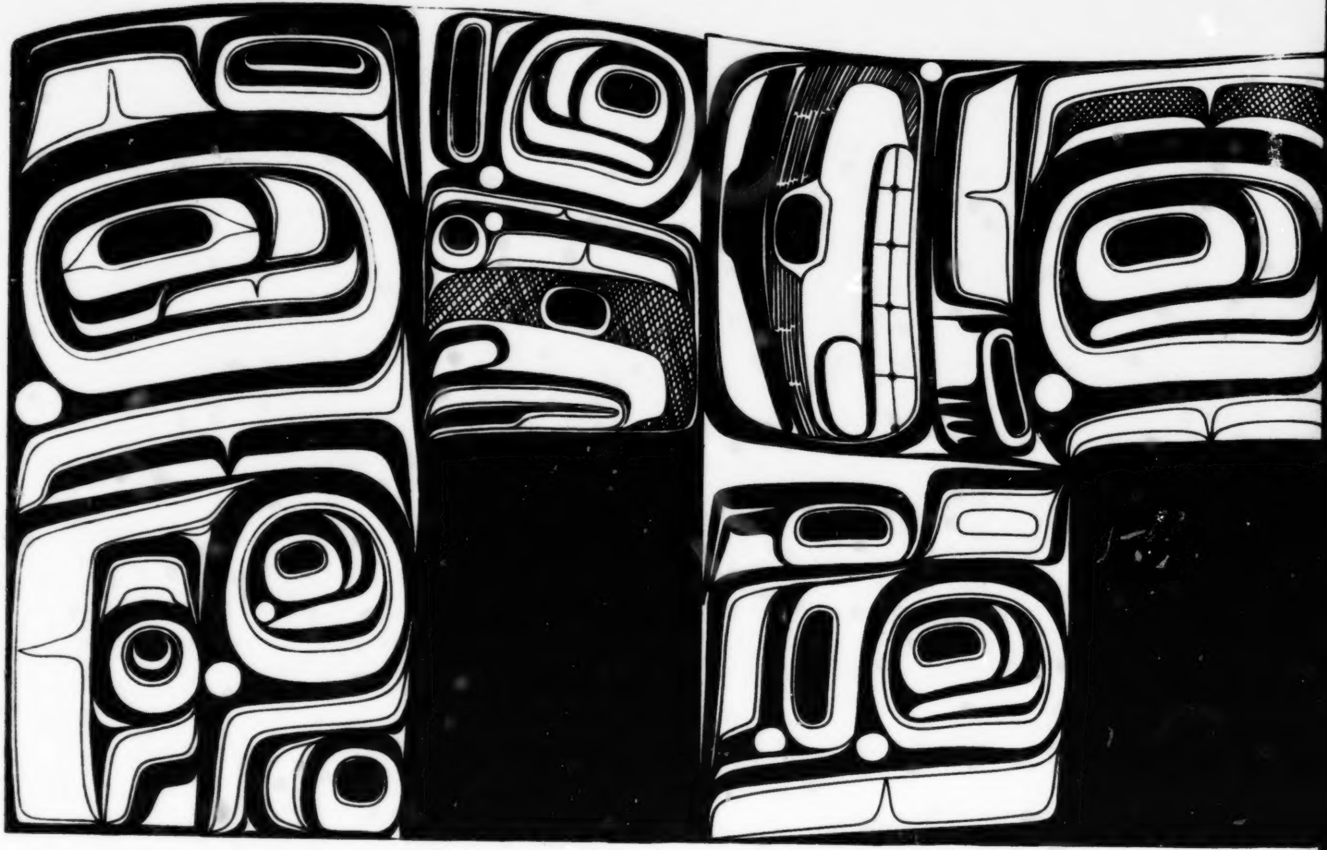
Wilson objected to my having rendered the design in reverse, maintaining that the structure was so delicate that even this change destroyed something of the intent of the artist. He eventually commissioned Hilary Stewart to re-draw them the correct way.

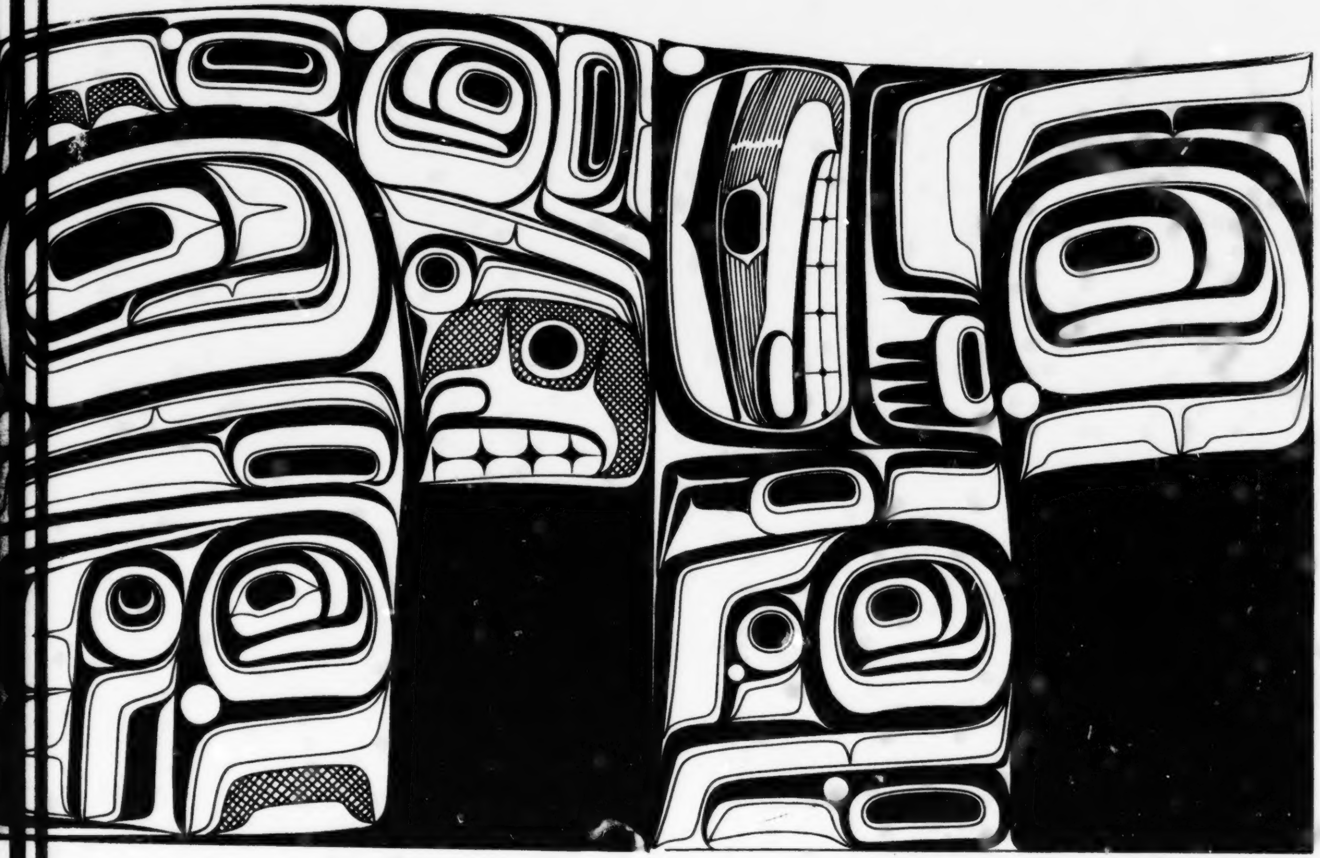
That was the end of my participation in the relationship between Wilson and the "Master of the Black Field", as we have come to call this great, otherwise anonymous, artist, who, judging from the number of examples of his works we find in many collections, experimented time and time again with this form before he achieved this masterpiece. I will leave it to someone else, some day, to reconstruct what secrets Wilson found in this magnificent, monumental, challenging work.

First, however, a couple of footnotes. I recently revisited the box on the same shelf in the attic, and pointed out to some of the curatorial staff that it was considered an important piece by Boas, Duff, and for what it was worth, me. As a result, they decided it deserved a plastic bag to keep off the dust. So, in its dark confinement, surrounded by many similar but lesser examples of its kind, it enjoys a kind of distinction. Perhaps because of this it was chosen by Alan Wardwell for his recent show of Northwest Coast art "Objects of Bright Pride". To us who have known and loved it so long, whether it is relegated again to its attic obscurity, or eventually given the permanent setting it deserves, it will always have that powerful inner glow that distinguishes true works of genius.

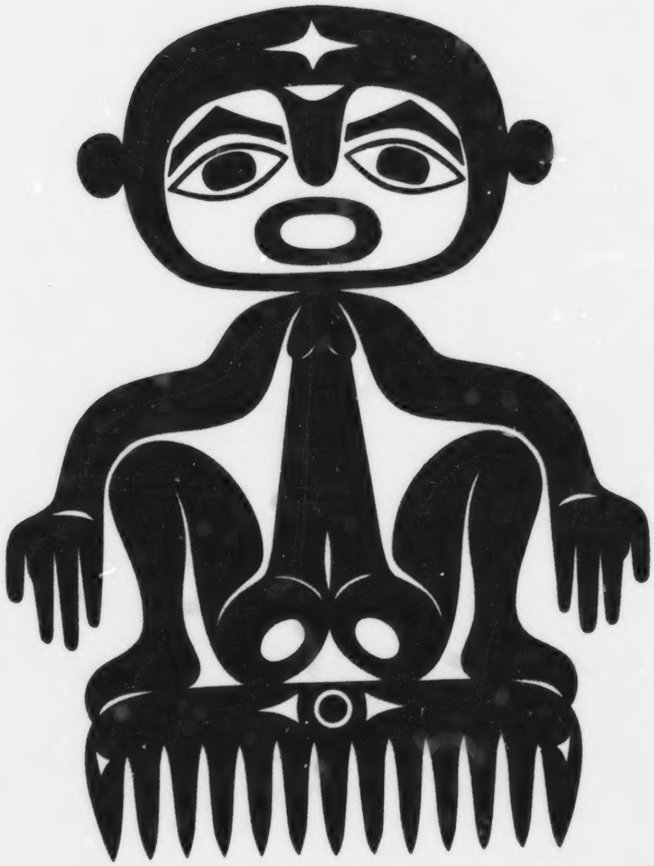
Reference

Boas, Franz
1955 Primitive Art, New York, Dover.





Graphic rendering of all four sides of "The Box" / *Bill Reid*



Yahtshulthaht / *Hupquatchew*

Yahtshulthaht

Yahtshulthaht is the West Coast name
for the Beaufort Range of mountains
on Vancouver Island.
Translated, the word means—
travelling back and forth on its surface

Hupquatchew

I have long been fascinated with petroglyphs and early stone sculpture from the Northwest Coast. In 1975 Wilson Duff published Images Stone B.C. *I saw the book and was taken with some of his ideas, and some of the book's illustrations (notably #74, #75, #101). I have never been shy in depicting human anatomy, and the illustrations seemed to challenge me to play with the human form a little more. Eyes, mouths, eyebrows, heads and hands have long been emphasized in our contemporary works. But the penis! Ever since the early missionaries went about lopping the penises off of old carvings, we've been reluctant to portray human sexuality in a true manner.*

Primarily though, this print tells a story:

Long time ago there was a guy called Kwatyaht. He was very well known for his ability to do great things. He had all kinds of costumes that he could put on when he felt like being something other than a man. He could become, at different times, a rock, a whale, a sand-bar, a type of codfish, a hemlock needle, and many other objects and beings. He was also known for leaving his mark in the water and land around him. The following story is about how he left some lakes, a range of mountains, and a valley full of trees for the Opetchesaht people.

Kwatyaht was attending a potlatch among one of the tribes in the northern part of the west coast. (He might have been among the Ehatisaht tribe. Moses Smith, a relative of mine, has told me that the Ehatisaht have stories about Opetchesaht people visiting them. One story involves the Opetchesaht pole vaulting to clear small streams.) At this potlatch Kwatyaht received three presents—a codfish bladder full of whale oil, a carved wooden comb, and a single eagle-down fluff. His host told him that even though they looked quite humble, they were all three quite magical.

When the potlatch was over, Kwatyaht set off on foot toward his home. He walked to the southeast through the great interior valleys of Vancouver Island. The trail he followed was not well worn but it was well known to the Opetchesaht.

As he travelled, Kwatyaht noticed a band of wolves approaching him from behind. He felt that they followed too close for comfort so he walked faster. The wolves stayed with him and seemed to get closer still. The faster Kwatyaht moved, the faster the wolves moved. Because they growled and showed their teeth Kwatyaht sensed that they had bad intentions. Seeing their long pointed teeth he began to run.

Again the wolves kept pace as he sped up. Kwatyaht pulled the codfish bladder out of the pack he carried, and pryed the plug loose. He spilled out some of the oil and said, "Let this turn into a lake." Right away there was a large inland lake. This is Sproat Lake today—a large lake on the western side of the Alberni Valley.

Now the wolves were miles behind him. Soon they were closer than ever. Again he poured oil from the bladder. This time he used lots of it and said "Let this be a great lake." Sure enough, there was a huge lake right away. This is Great Central Lake, a very large lake on the northwest side of the Alberni Valley.

The wolves were far behind, for a while, but again they drew near. As he ran, Kwatyaht didn't notice that his bladder of whale oil was leaking and smaller lakes were being formed. These are a group of small lakes and ponds that lie between Great Central Lake and Elsie Lake, northwest of Ahswinis, the #1 Reserve of the Opetchesaht.

Now Kwatyaht opened the bladder for the last time and poured out the little bit of oil that was left. He then threw the bladder into the puddle of oil and said "Let this be a lake." The last lake of his making came to be right away, and this is Elsie Lake today—a small lake on the northwest side of the Alberni Valley.

Elsie Lake wasn't very big, so the wolves kept coming.

Kwatyaht ran in an easterly direction almost to the coast, then doubled back heading to the west. In a burst of speed, he left the wolves quite far behind. Now he pulled out his carved wooden comb and threw it to the ground, saying, "Become a range of mountains." Between him and the wolves a range of mountains shot up into the sky, right away. This is the Beaufort Range today—the eastern border of the Alberni Valley.

The wolves were very far behind him to the east now so Kwatyaht slowed to a walk and began to catch his breath.

After some time passed he heard the growling of the wolves again. As he ran, he thought about the tiny little eagle-down fluff. He took it from its hiding place behind his ear and threw it on the ground, saying, "Become a great forest." As the fluff landed it became a tall dark forest of firs, hemlocks and cedars—the forest that once filled the Alberni Valley. The wolves became lost in all the thousands of trees. They split up and ran in different directions. Kwatyaht made his way to Ahswinis and his canoe. Climbing aboard he started down the Somass River and stopped at Choo Chupkook.

This is how the lakes, mountains and trees of the Opetchesahts' Valley got formed. And this is how Kwatyaht got away from the wolves.

Poems by Wilson Duff

There were many messages left behind when Wilson Duff died. Many people have already received pieces of what he was trying to say, his students and colleagues, his friends and his family; and each being has received these evolving messages differently. Please understand that the following selections were left for an undefined audience. They are submitted only as fragments, arranged by someone other than himself, to be seen as messages, to be received by you.

M.D.

MESSAGES

A message is a gift
of meaning.
Communication, part of every message,
is part of every gift.
Communication is the essence of gift.
The purest gift is pure communication:
the gift of sight.

Let me show you how to see
it my way.
Show me how to see
it your way.

A message sent and received
is a mutual gift of meaning.

The least message sent and received
is the whole mutual gift of life.

DEATH IS A LIE

If I know
(as I do know)
that I have received, in this life,
a message
sent long ago, during a different life;
a secret message,
sent only once,
known only to the sender:

then I know
that the message I have received
must be from my
self.

And if the message says
(as it does say)
"Time is the question and Death is the answer",

then I know
that the message I have sent my self
must be a lie.

What is the truth
in the sending and receiving of a message
averring Time, averring Death,
but refuting Time in the sending,
and refuting Death in the receiving?

Life is the truth in the message.

Time is the lie.
Death is the lie.

SPIRIT QUEST

When at last I got all the way there,

what I found was myself coming back.

COME SEEM WITH ME

Grant me paradox,
the dance of opposites,
and I will build for you
a sanity-preserver.

Grant me one fatal flaw,
one vital lie,
and I will write for you
a recipe for truth.

Grant only that I know already
the very conformation of the answer,
and I will ask for you
an all-revealing question.
(Or grant me, if you choose, the opposite,
for it will serve the purpose just as well.)

Let the first question
hide the first premise.
Let the last question
be the one that seeks it out.
Let the law that governs all other laws
blanket every premise,
including its own
(which it is).
For the very shape of certitude
is to be found lying in the balance.

Grant me self-delusion,
it is my proof that I exist.
Let me put on my self-made mask
before we peer into the mirror,
and I will show you to your satisfaction
that Self exists.
(The secret, which I'll let you guess yourself,
is that the mirror has twice the magic of the mask.)

Grant me the mask.
Take for granted the Mirror.
And we can pretend
to the act of recognition.
We can perform
the act of knowing.

THE WORLD IS AS SHARP AS A KNIFE

There are no laws,
which you can trust to work.
There are just rules,
which you must make to work.

In the one hand,
you are holding the mirror.

On the other hand,
you are the mask.

Put on the mask and look in the mirror.
What you see
(the mirror does not lie)
is that which is common to both,
the truth you can believe.

FALSE MEMORY

Every pain
carries a memory
of all past pains.

Every fear
resonates to the memory
of all past fears.

Every parting
has the sorrow
of all past partings,
and tinges every future parting.

Every joy
is stashed away with all past joys,
and used to colour every future joy.

Every cry
is every past and future cry.

Every laugh
is every past and future laugh.

Every thought of death
is a memory of birth.

THE MASK IN THE MIRROR

That lonely man of art, the poet,
keeps tossing his pebbles shaped of metaphor
into the pond of analogy,
delighting in the perfect circles he has caused to form,
then closing his eyes to watch the ripples spread
all the way across, and back.
It is the restless lapping on the banks
that feels so good,
so . . . absolute.

That lonely man of myth, the author,
keeps tossing his pebbles shaped of parable
into the sea of experience,
delighting in the perfect circles he has caused to form,
then closing his eyes to let the wavelets travel
all the way across, and back.
It is the restless pounding of the surf
that sounds so reassuring
through the night.

That lonely man of ritual, the actor,
keeps tossing his pebbles shaped of pantomime
into the ocean of the audience,
delighting in the perfect circles he has caused to form,
then closing his eyes to let the recognition spread
all the way across, and back.
It is the restless echoing of laughter
that makes him feel convinced
he's not alone.

That lonely, self-masked figure
can't stop peering in his mirror,
and takes what little comfort he can find
from shaping pebbles
into self-portraits.

FROG'S MIRROR

Frog is
the only thing
that by absolute definition
is not me,
because he is
not everything.

He is the opposite
of everything else,
including me,
and everything I am opposite of,
and himself.

His mirror shows him
no reflection.

His beginning and end are the same
because he has no story.
Of all acts he says:
"It has nothing to do with me."
He only takes a stand
in somebody else's stead.
He is the unit
of dissolution.
He is disintegration
crumpled into a solid ball
and thrown away.

Everybody else has memory,
he has the opposite.
He cannot sing,
because he has forgotten his previous note,
or denied it.
He cannot commit incest
because he is not his mother's son.
He cannot commit murder, or cannibalism,
because he is not the same kind as his victim.

My mirror shows me all things in the universe.
Frog's mirror is empty.
I am myself and all that I see in the mirror.
Frog is only the mirror.

Self-recognition would be Frog recognizing himself
in my mirror.
Self-recognition would be
me
recognizing Frog
in
my
self.

I GUESS I BETTER LISTEN TO MY MIRROR

Looking in
the paradox mirror
is such fun.
I seem to see in there
the very shape of things,
not just the surface
of me.

I look,
I see,
but it's
not me.
I think that proves
I'm really here.

Isn't self-delusion
a proof of self?

I hold my Frog mask in front of my face
and say:
"Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
who's the most smart-assed kid of all?"

Hey, mirror,
what the hell do you mean by that?

If only I could get Frog
to hold up his self-made Frog mask,
and look in the mirror, . . .

THE ABSOLUTE IS PARADOX

Don't buy the Absolute,
it can't exist.

There was no Creation,
there is only transformation.

Absolutes think they are absolutely sublime,
but they are really absolutely absurd.

They are only absolute paradoxes.

You can't escape paradox that way.

GLEANINGS I *March 19, 1975*

God's Image:

Man is the mask that God is making for Himself.

UNTITLED

God is not real.
It is the rituals to him that are real.
Real rituals
make a real God.

Apple is not real.
It is the eating that is real.
Really eating apples
makes apple real.

Song is not real.
It is the singing that is real.
Really singing songs
makes song real.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS GOING TOO FAR

Stone images

are

always

hard

to see.

The only thing they really, really mean

is everything they only seem to mean.

UNTITLED

Smooth
is a way of being
soft
and hard
at the same time.

UNTITLED

The stone eye that never closes
remains awake through its own death.

UNTITLED

You can have it both ways
if only you will be content with halfs.

GLEANINGS II *March 19, 1975*

Life is
equal parts
living and
dying.

Neither and
both are
equal parts of the whole.

Myth is
equal parts
telling and
implying.

It is equal parts
there and not there
at the same time.

You will not go down twice to the same river. Heraclitus

You are the river,
flowing,
both ways at once.
This brief moment, your life, is
one going to the river,
one cupful of water.

You are the thirst.
You drink.

You are the wheel,
turning,
both ways at once.
this brief moment, your life, is
one touching of your rim to earth,
as you journey.

Who feels that touch?
You.

You are the eye,
gazing,
into itself.
This brief moment, your life, is
one glint of recognition.

It comforts you.
You turn your gaze to the river.

DUSK IS DAWNING

A man starts life
envying his dad,
and reaches the end
envying his son.

They have the thing
he wants the most.
They have to be
the same person.

NOVEMBER 30, 1974

Lay down together
two pieces of wood
in the fireplace.
They burn together,
each beside the other,
reflecting
each other's heat
enough to make a fire,
a dance of flame,
which is the purpose.

In the morning,
two charred shells.
A space between,
just enough space,
a slightly twisting space
reflecting the shape of growth
to reach the sun,
and gather in the light
and warmth,...
and cold white ash between.
which is the result.

One partner in the Dance
is Time.
The other,
wood's Wish to burn.

TIGHT REIN

The discipline of Science
holds time constant.

Four billion years
and one four-billionth of a second
are of the same Time.

That unexamined premise
creates black holes
that are white lies,
and universes
that can never stop expanding
both ways.

LOOSE REIN

or

SEEMS LIKE THE UNIVERSE AIN'T NEVER GOING TO STOP EXPANDING

It seems there was this really big, big bang,
someplace,
four billion years ago this month,
or twelve,
something like that.
It coughed,
or if you like, ejaculated,
out of . . .
well, nowhere, I guess,
(there really was nowhere for it to come from)
with all the conceivable energy,
in all conceivable directions,
all the conceivable matter
of the whole universe.
That macrocosmic cough, it seems,
is still happening,
right now, today:
the universe still seems to be expanding
at something like the very speed of light,
and always will, we're told,
forever.
Or at least until
time
stops.

It seems that far, far out in space,
right now, this very night,
are lots of really black, black holes
swallowing themselves;
sucking in,
or if you like, invaginating,
into . . .
well, nowhere, I guess,
(there really is nowhere for them to go)
their own mass,
and everything around them,
including light.
How such a thing could be
just ain't their worry,
because for them, we're told,
time
has stopped.

It seems that inside every single atom,
right here and now, this virtual second,
are lots of little particles and energies;
unimaginably tiny solar systems,
living and dying
unimaginably short and energetic lives,
like, one-four-billionth of a second, and
four billion electron-volts,
or twelve,
something like that.
It seems they're getting tinier,
brighter,
shorter,
all the time
these days.

I guess the biggest thing there is,
and the oldest,
is the outside edge of the universe.
Seems like it started out at the speed of light
and is still going,
and isn't going to stop
forever.
Whatever it's made of,
travelling at that kind of speed, we're told,
its mass is infinitely large,
and its time
has stopped.

I guess the smallest thing there is,
and the most permanent,
is the centre of a black hole.
Seems like all its matter, light, and other bric-a-brac
are crushed to zero size
by infinite gravity,
and its time
has stopped.

Or maybe the smallest thing there is,
and the newest,
is the ultimate sub-atomic particle.
Seems like it would have
pretty near zero mass,
and pretty near ultimate brightness.
Trouble is,
it wouldn't hardly have time
to get started.

It's kind of funny that the biggest thing there is,
and the oldest,
is already the biggest thing there is, and
is getting bigger at the fastest conceivable rate,
and always will,
forever.
Man, oh man,
it's pretty hard to conceive of anything
bigger than that,
or older.

It's kind of funny that the smallest thing there is,
and the briefest,
is already the smallest thing there is, and
keeps getting smaller all the time,
and shorter.
Man, oh man,
it's pretty hard to conceive of anything
smaller than that,
or briefer.

It's kind of funny that Man
finds himself
exactly
half way between.

MY 24 HOUR URINE SAMPLE BY WILSON DUFF

I am creating
for that nice lady in the lab
the best 24 hour urine sample ever made
she is so nice
I'd hate to disappoint her
quite the opposite
if the truth were known

I am drinking
all kinds of fluidities
all colours
all temperatures
in layers
and mixtures
and viscosities
and velocities
and turbidities

I am making
such nice new fluidities
pints
quarts
gallons
such a nice lady

I seem to be having
a bit of difficulty
with the little neck
of that big bottle.

HINDSIGHT

The best cure

for male menopause:

a spirit quest

at puberty.

Nothing Comes Only in Pieces

Wilson Duff

Ray Wilson yawned, and sat down on a log on the beach side of the road. The rain had completely stopped. The wind, in gentle gusts, was shredding the low dark clouds and blowing them away. Out on the sandbar, at the edge of the surf, he could see a moving patch of sunlight in which a busy knot of crows and gulls were arguing over something, and glistening pure white and black as they rose and fell on the wind, straight up and down. The warmth of the sun was coming through, and white mists were beginning to rise out of the sand. It would soon be warm enough for swimming.

The school bus was getting ready to leave. Its raucous horn, which pierced the stillness of the village on the morning of every school day, was known, half-affectionately, as "Raven's Cry," because it was supposed to sound something like the early morning caws of that wise old bird of Haida folklore. And it was just about time for it to call.

A couple of the older guys were going to borrow an outboard and take off up the Inlet to get slate for carving. Maybe he should go along. He was using up his own supply pretty fast, and didn't want to run out. His carving was getting to be pretty good.... His Mom said it was at least as good as his Dad's. It might be his last chance for a while. But if he did go, the Principal would probably give his hell. He was trying to keep the attendance figure high, especially for the Haida kids in the school.

The first period was going to be Socials, with that new teacher. Ray had the feeling that she liked him. She even seemed to expect him to be smart and, boy, that was a switch from some of the others. She was supposed to be a real good teacher, with special training, straight out of University. She could easy have got a job in Vancouver if she wanted, but they say she chose the school in Charlotte to be near the Haida people. Sometimes she used awful big words, but some of her ideas were interesting. And she had promised the class something special this morning, something to do with Haida culture for a change. It might be interesting.

The horn sounded. Ray ran and caught the bus.

II

The New Teacher still found herself nervous and excited before each class. But this particular morning, as she placed a copy of the mimeographed sheet entitled "Haida Myth of Creation" on each of the desks, she felt an added edge on her excitement. Now that the work of the term was well under way, she could begin to try out some of the new ideas she had picked up in her Anthropology courses and her special Education course. Curriculum enrichment, for example, and community involvement. When you have ethnic minority students in your class it is important to learn their cultural background and teach them that it certainly isn't anything to be ashamed of. Quite the opposite, in fact. By enriching her Social

Studies curriculum with Haida Indian content, she would be benefiting the non-Haida as well as the Haida students.

"Settle down, class. As I promised I have something of special interest for you today." There was the usual amount of banter and horseplay before the class became serious. She patiently waited it out, for she had already learned that if she didn't, an undercurrent of nonsense might remain lurking just beneath the surface, waiting to find ways to interfere with her teaching. "Settle down, class, please."

"I think it is especially important for all of us who live on the Queen Charlotte Islands to appreciate the culture of the original inhabitants, the Haida Indian people. It is even more important for those of you who are Haida yourselves." She smiled at Raymond, the handsome, friendly boy of fourteen who was already something of a favourite of hers. He didn't talk much, but then none of them did. She had the impression that he liked her. He seemed brighter than the other Haida boys, and at the same time, more thoughtful. Her experience, admittedly, was quite limited, but it was already evident to her that he was definitely university material, perhaps even capable of going all the way to a Ph.D.

"While I was at University I made a special study of Haida culture, and I want to give you some of the benefit today. I'd like to read with you the Haida Myth of Creation. It's on your desks. I copied this myth from a very authoritative book by the anthropologist John R. Swanton, of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, who learned it from elders of the tribe right here at Skidegate in 1901. We'll read this interesting story together and then discuss it. But first I want to explain to you a couple of things about Haida mythology.

"The Raven was the culture hero of the Haida. They did not believe in God until after the missionaries came. They believed that the great Raven created the world and the things in it. Raven was also a trickster, who did all sorts of funny and foolish things. The people used to tell stories about him to make each other laugh.

"You should not expect the myth to make the same kind of sense as a scientific account of the formation of the earth. Mythology isn't like that, it doesn't explain things in those terms. It is more like the parables in the Bible."

"What is a parable?" somebody asked.

"Well, it's a story that is really more complicated than it seems at first. It seems to be a simple story, but it contains a lesson about a more important subject. You might not see its full meaning right away. Parables are often associated with their tellers, like Jesus' story of the lost sheep..."

"You mean it's a story someone tells about himself?" asked a voice. There was a ripple of laughter through the class.

"Don't be smart, now. Please be serious. All right, class, settle down."

She waited for silence.

"I'll read the story aloud, and you can follow along on your copies; that way you'll understand it better. Pay attention, now."

> In the earliest times, a boundless expanse of sky overspread a boundless expanse of sea. In the sea lay a single reef, on which all the supernatural beings were heaped together, asleep. Raven flew about above the sea, unable to find a foothold; and at last, looking at the neighboring sky, he became fascinated by it. Then he ran his beak into it and climbed up.
>
> In the sky-country lay a five-row town, where the chief's daughter had just given birth to a child; and when night came, Raven entered the chief's house, scooped the baby out of its skin, and took its place. The infant was not old enough to receive any substantial nourishment: so Raven became hungry, and, slipping out at night, stole an eye from everyone in one row of the town, and these he ate.

"Ugh," said the voice at the back. "Settle down," said the teacher.

> He did this four nights in succession. A woman who was stone from her hips down, and who never slept, ...

The voice at the back made some comment she didn't catch, and there was a burst of laughter. "All right, no more comments. Pay attention, please."

> ... sat in one corner of the house, however, and observed what was happening. At last she told the people.
>
> Then the town chief called the people together, and they sang a song for the child. In the midst of it, however, the one holding it let it fall, and it dropped down out of the sky country, turning to the right in its descent, until it fell upon the surface of the great waters. Now the cradle drifted about a long time, and the child cried a long time, until it cried itself to sleep; but while it slept, something said "Your powerful grandfather invites you in." Raven turned quickly towards the sound, but there was nothing there. By and by the same thing happened. Then he looked through the eye-hole in his marten skin blanket, and presently out from beneath the water came a grebe, which said, "Your powerful grandfather invites you in."
>
> Then it dived out of sight.
>
> Now Raven got up, and he found his cradle floating against a kelp with two heads. He stepped in it, and, lo!, it was really a two-headed house-pole made of stone. When he clambered down, he found he could get along as well as in the air above.
>
> Beneath was a house, and, as he stood before it, a voice came from it saying, "Come inside, my son; I hear that you come to borrow something from me." Now Raven entered, and in the back part of

the house sat a man with hair as white as a seagull. Then the old man sent him a box which hung in the corner. There were four others inside of this, and, pulling them apart, he took out two long objects,—one covered with shining points; the other black. Handing them to Raven, he said, "I am you. That is you." He referred to some slender blue objects walking about upon the screen in the rear of the house.

The teacher detected rustling at the back. "Pay attention, now. This is rather hard to follow."

Then the old man said. "Lay this speckled stone in the water first, and last this black one; after which bite off a piece of each and spit it out again, and the pieces will re-unite."

"That's un-sa-ni-ta-ry," sang the voice. There was a little wave of nervous laughter. "Settle down," snapped the teacher. "Have more respect for Haida culture. Now I've lost the thread of the story. Please pay attention."

But when Raven had gone out, he put the black one into the water first; and when he had bitten off part of the rock with shining points and spit it out again, the pieces rebounded. He had done differently from the way he had been told.

Now he went back to the black one, bit off part of it and spit it out again, when the pieces stuck. These were going to become trees. He put this into the water, and it stretched itself out, becoming the Haida country, to which all of the supernatural beings swam over.

"There is the story, class. Isn't it interesting?" She looked around at the Haida kids. They seemed a little embarrassed.

"Any questions or discussion?"

"Why did that stone lady wait four nights, when the Raven was eating the eyes out of all the people?"

"Well, I think four is a kind of magic number in Indian stories. Lots of things are made to happen four times, because it is the ritual number of the Indians of North America. Do any of you Haida students know about that?"

There was uneasy silence. Somehow it wasn't working out the way she had hoped. They really should show more interest in a story right from their own village. Perhaps if she could get the Haida kids to go to their elders and hear the same story from them, . . . Raymond had his hand up.

"I was wondering why there were five boxes, if the magic number is four."

"Yes, Raymond, that's a good question. Perhaps the number of boxes was meant to be four. Do you think you could find out for us?"

She was thinking of the old man named Solomon Wilson, who lived in the white house near the far end of the village, and was known as the best authority on the old Haida ways. He might even be Raymond's grandfather.

"As an assignment, Raymond, why don't you visit that nice old Mr. Wilson and ask his to explain the story?"

"You mean Chini Solomon?"

"'Chinny' Solomon? What a name to call him!"

"It's OK, just means 'Grandpa' Solomon. It's what we all call him."

"Yes. Why don't you visit him this evening and take your copy of the story to read to him. See if he knows it, and ask him especially about the five boxes."

"OK, I'll try. Can I ask you a bit more about parables? You said they're not really about what they seem to be about?"

"That's right, Raymond, and I gave the example of Jesus' parable of the lost sheep. He just made it a story about sheep so that the shepherds would understand it, but they could also see that it was really about lost men, really about themselves."

"Are all parables really about the listeners?"

"In a sense, I suppose. What I meant to say is that it shows something about Jesus: how skilful a teacher he was, and how well he understood those people."

"Then in a way it's about Jesus too?"

"Only implicitly." Raymond looked puzzled. "While you are concentrating on the story itself, you are not really conscious of the teller. But when you think about it, you can see that the story implies a lot of things about the teller, and the understandings he shares with the listeners."

"You said that the Haida Creation story is like a parable. Is it also about the teller and the listeners as well?"

The question puzzled her, and she didn't quite know how to answer it. "I suppose. . . . The trouble with anonymous myths like this is that we do not know who the original teller was. It was told by—and to—many generations of Haida people."

"But wouldn't it be the same anyway? Implicitly, it was about the understandings they shared. If they both understood the same way, it was implicitly about them?"

"In a way, implicitly, I suppose."

"If I can get to understand the story, is it also implicitly about me?"

"That's a rather strange way to look at it, Raymond. But if you do learn to understand it the way the old people did, I suppose it is implicitly about you, and them. And about understanding, for that matter."

The class was restless. "If there is no more discussion, class, you may go now."

III

"Hi, Chini Sol. Mind if I come in and talk?"

"Hi there, Ray. It's about time you paid me a visit. Come on in. Come into the living room. What you got there, big boy, the story of your life?"

"No, no, Chini-chin-chin, it's a story from school. It's an old Haida story. That's what I want to ask you about. The new teacher got it out of a book at the university."

"Let's have a look." Sol read it through. "It's out of that fellow Swanton's book, isn't it. A white guy showed it to me in Vancouver. I can just remember when that Swanton was here, Ray. I was younger than you, I guess. He was collecting a lot of these old stories."

"You know this one?"

"Yes. I've heard this story before. Quite a few times. It used to be a pretty well-known story."

Sol sat quietly thinking for a few moments.

"There was one old man. They used to call him John Sky. Real old man with long white hair, very white. He used to try to get me to learn those old stories, Ray. But in those days I was too damned busy trying to learn the New Testament. Trying to please Mr. Freeman, the missionary, you know. To him these old stories were just ignorant superstitions. He'd tan my hide if I missed school to learn something like that.

"That old man, John Sky. He was supposed to know a lot about the stars, the constellations, you know. He was kind of in charge of the old time calendar. There used to be a few of them did that: watched the stars, watched the weather, watched where the sun came up each day.

"One time, I was just about your age, Ray, he spent a lot of time telling me this same story. It seemed pretty important to him. I guess it was because it's the story of how these Queen Charlotte Islands were created. Whether he believed it or not, I don't know. He tried to get me to learn it, you know. He explained a lot of things about it to me. But I guess I just didn't have enough time."

"Will you tell me what you do know about it?"

"Sure. OK. How do you want to do it? There's an awful lot in it, you know. Why don't you just read it out a little piece at a time, and I'll explain what I can."

> In the earliest times, a boundless expanse of sky overspread a boundless expanse of sea. On the sea lay a single reef, on which all the supernatural beings were heaped together, asleep. Raven flew about above the sea, unable to find a foothold; and at last, looking at the neighboring sky, he became fascinated by it. Then he ran his beak into it and climbed up.

Sol raised his hand slightly. "They believed the ocean was kind of . . . a flat circle, you know, like a saucer upside down. And the sky above it was kind of solid, like a clear plastic bowl, Ray, upside down over this world. They say the world was kind of dark then, but the sky was clear, and brighter. That's what attracted Raven's attention to it in the first place."

"Where did Raven come from in the first place, Sol?"

"It doesn't say, Ray. That's a question the story doesn't answer."

"What were the supernatural beings?"

"That's a bit complicated, Ray. I'll tell you about them another time. I want to tell you about that Raven, the one they usually call Raven, you know. He wasn't actually a bird. That's one thing a lot of them don't understand. It wasn't the raven, the bird, that was doing those things. He was more like a man, but he wasn't an ordinary man, either. There were none of them around yet. That Raven, when he's in these important old stories, like the Creation or the Flood, he's called 'Nankilstlas'. No, that's not quite right. The way they used to say his name was 'Nankilstlas-lingai', which means 'The one who is going to become Nankilstlas'. You see, Ray, in these early stories, the way I've got it figured out, he wasn't anybody yet. But he was the one that was going to become that fellow they sometimes call Raven.

"What does 'Nankilstlas' itself mean, Sol?"

"Nankilstlas. That's a name, you know, a Raven clan name. Old Captain Gold used to have that name. I saw in Swanton's book that he translated it 'He whose voice is obeyed'. That's pretty close, I guess. It's something like 'He who is to have the say in things', or 'He who is going to make things the way he wants them'. So you see, Ray, that Nankilstlas-lingai was 'He who is going to become the one who will make things the way he wants them'. He wasn't really . . . didn't really have any form of his own yet. He was just a little piece of life with the intention of doing something, like finding out what makes the light in the sky, or creating a world so he'd have a place to land."

Ray gave a puzzled laugh. "He was only an intention?"

Sol smiled. "That's all he was at that stage. Or a little piece of curiosity."

"But he was flying around, Sol, and he had a sharp beak. He was Raven."

Sol laughed. "OK, Ray, we'll let him be Raven whenever we need to. It's pretty hard to think of somebody who doesn't have any form whatever. But anyhow, I'm going to keep thinking of him as the tiniest speck of black against the shining sky, or maybe just as the sharp point of Raven's beak and the intention behind it."

"Are you teasing me, Sol?"

"I guess so, Ray. Partly, anyway."

"Was Raven like God?"

"Well, I don't think so. The old people did believe in something like God, you know. It was what made the sky light up. It was not so much a person as a source of power. All the power in the world. They called it 'Sins-sganagwai', which means 'Sacred power that lights the heavens', or something like that. It was as mighty as the world, like God, but wasn't a person."

"Wasn't the chief of the sky country the same as God?"

"No, I don't think so. If you have to think of it as a person, it might almost be better to think of it as that chief's daughter, Raven's mother. But Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, was kind of the opposite. He wasn't big, like God or Sins-sganagwai, big as the world. He was small, at least at the beginning of the story. Small as you can get."

"Was he like Jesus Christ? He taught people things too."

Sol laughed. "I don't think so, Ray. I never thought of that. Well, maybe a little bit. His mother was a virgin too, in a way. But Raven was never an ordinary man, like Jesus was."

"The teacher called him a trickster and a culture hero."

"Well, she can call him whatever she wants, I guess. He wasn't a bird; that's all I want to say about him. A lot of people don't understand that."

In the sky-country lay a five-row town, where the chief's daughter had just given birth to a child; and when night came, Raven entered the chief's house, scooped the baby out of its skin, and took its place.

"Hold it a minute, Ray. There are a couple of things there. That chief's house was in the middle of the first of the five rows. And that baby was born the exact instant that Raven's beak pierced the sky. That seemed to be important, those two things happening at the same time. It's as if he was getting a new kind of life. Then he skinned the baby and took its place; they say he did it through its foot. It's as if by doing that he was taking a new form. He didn't really have any form before that."

"Who was that baby's father?"

"Didn't have one, I guess. It doesn't say, Ray. That's a question the story doesn't answer. The only man in that part of the story is her own father. And Raven himself, of course."

"There's no way of having a baby without a father, is there?"

"Not in this world, Ray. The Bible says you can do it with a piece of rib bone, the way Adam made Eve."

"You don't believe that kind of story, do you Sol?"

They laughed.

"Maybe by sticking his beak into the sky. . . ."

"What's that, Ray?"

"Nothing, Sol. I'll read another piece."

The infant was not old enough to receive any substantial nourishment: so Raven became hungry, and, slipping out at night, stole an eye from everyone in one row of the town, and these he ate. He did this four nights in succession.

"There's a missing part in there, Ray. The way old John Sky told it to me, there was more to it than that. At night everyone was asleep. Except of course for that old half-rock woman in the corner, she never closed her eyes. Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, kind of stood up out of the baby in the cradle. He went out and got those eyes, one from each person; they were asleep. He came back in, holding them underneath his blanket. He pushed aside the little fire that was burning where his mother was sleeping, and dug a little hole there, and emptied them in. Then he kind of mixed them with the ashes, and ate them. And when he ate them, they gave out a little sound, like a popping sound. And he laughed when he ate them. It seemed to be important that he laughed when he heard that popping sound."

"What's important about that, Sol? Did the old people think it was funny to eat eyes? The teacher said that the Raven stories were supposed to make the people laugh."

"No. No, no. This wasn't a funny story at all. These early parts of the Raven story are dead serious. Nobody was even permitted to laugh when they were being told."

"What's so important about laughing?"

Sol thought a moment. "I don't know all about it, but laughing is an important thing. An awful important thing. There's a lot of different kinds of laughing, and smiling too, a lot of different kinds that mean different things. You see, the way I figured it out, Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, was getting some kind of wisdom by eating those eyes. And there's a kind of laughing we do whenever we catch on to something important. It's like hearing a joke, Ray. You get the right meaning in a flash, and that's when you laugh, when it just makes sense to you. Maybe that's why Raven was laughing, I don't know. Or maybe he was laughing because he thought he was putting something over on somebody. He thought nobody was watching him, but the joke was on him after all."

"Why did that half-stone lady let it go on for four nights before she reported it?"

"I think that's part of the same thing, Ray. Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, was getting what he needed to do the later parts of his job of making the world. It's as if he needed those four kinds of eyes, so that he would see things the right way later on. I don't know why he didn't get the fifth kind of eyes. I always used to puzzle over that. Maybe he was never meant to have all those different kinds of sight. Or maybe he didn't need it, because it was the same as the one he had in the first place. I can't figure that one out."

"Who was that lady anyway?"

"I don't know. It doesn't say. But there is a funny thing about her."

"She was stone from the hips down. At least she couldn't be anybody's mother."

"That's not what I mean. It's that Raven didn't seem to be able to see her. Every night before he went out he looked around the house, and everybody was sleeping, all in the same position. It must be that she was invisible to him. She could always see him, but he could never see her. Maybe the only thing that she didn't see was that it was eyes he was eating. He hid them under his blanket, you know, and covered them with ashes. Maybe she didn't know they were eyes. I used to kind of wonder about that. We better get on with the story, Ray, we got a long way to go yet.

> A woman who was stone from her hips down, and who never slept, sat in one corner of the house, however, and observed what was happening. At last she told the people.
>
> Then the town chief called the people together, and they sang a song for the child. In the midst of it, however, the one holding it let it fall, and it dropped down out of the sky country, turning to the right in its descent, until it fell upon the surface of the great waters.

"Why was it turning to the right?"

"I don't know, Ray, I never figured that one out. But you can be sure it has a meaning. Every little detail in all these stories has a meaning, if you can only find it."

> Now the cradle drifted about a long time, and the child cried a long time, until it cried itself to sleep; but while it slept, something said, "Your powerful grandfather invites you in." Raven turned quickly towards the sound, but there was nothing there. By and by the same thing happened.

"That has got something to do with those eyes too, I think, Ray. It's not that there was nothing to see, it's that it wasn't in the right form for his eyes to see."

> Then he looked through the eye-hole in his marten skin blanket, and presently out from beneath the water came a grebe, which said, "Your powerful grandfather invites you in." Then it dived out of sight.
>
> Now Raven got up, and he found his cradle floating against a kelp with two heads. He stepped on it, and, lo!, it was really a two-headed house-pole made of stone. When he clambered down, he found he could get along as well as in the air above.

"Why a two-headed kelp, Sol? Is there a meaning in that?"

"Maybe it's just to let you know something about Raven. Maybe it only looked to him that it had two heads. Maybe he was seeing double. The old man didn't explain that part to me."

> Beneath was a house, and, as he stood before it, a voice came from it, saying, "Come inside, my son; . . ."

"Shouldn't that be 'grandson'?"

"I got a hunch it's right the way it is."

> . . . I hear that you come to borrow something from me." Now Raven entered, and in the back part of the house sat a man with hair as white as a seagull. Then the old man sent him for a box which hung in the corner. There were four others inside of this, and pulling them apart, . . .

"He didn't 'pull them apart'. He opened them one after the other, and out of each one he took the smaller box inside. It was from the innermost box that he took out those two things."

> . . . he took out two long objects,—one covered with shining points, the other black. Handing them to Raven, he said, "I am you. That is you." He referred to some slender blue objects walking about upon the screen in the rear of the house. Then the old man said, "Lay this speckled stone in the water first, and last this black one; after which bite off a piece of each and spit it out again, and the pieces will re-unite."

"This part is awfully complicated, Ray, and I never did quite understand it. There's something funny about those instructions he gave Raven. The way I remember John Sky saying it, it was, 'Lay this speckled thing in the water, and after you have laid this black one in the water, bite off a part of each and spit it on to the rest'. Seems to me there's something left out. You don't always know where both those things are. Let's get on and see what happens, and come back to this part later.

> But when Raven had gone out, he put the black one into the water first; and when he had bitten off part of the rock with shining points and spit it out again, the pieces rebounded. He had done differently from the way he had been told.
>
> How he went back to the black one, bit off part of it and spit it out again, when the pieces stuck. These were going to become trees, they say. He put this into the water, and it stretched itself out, becoming the Haida country, to which all of the supernatural beings swam over.

"Boy, that is complicated, Ray. I don't think Swanton got it quite right, I think he left out one of the steps. The way John Sky told it to me, Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, took those two things out of the house to put them on the water. He put the black one in the water first. He bit off part of the speckled stone first, and spit it on the rest, but it bounced off. Then he went back and bit off a part of the black one, and spit it on the rest, and it stuck. Then he bit off part of the speckled one again, and spit it out, and it stuck too. These were to be the trees. When he put the second one in the water it stretched itself out, becoming the Haida country. It's still a real puzzle to me. I've never been able to figure it out."

Sol sat silently for a while, resting from the mental effort. His wife looked in, and he asked her to make some tea.

"I want to think some more about that part myself, Sol. What the teacher wants to know most is why there were five boxes."

"That's a thing I remember about the way he told me the story. We talked about those five boxes for quite a while. It seemed as though a lot of the meaning was wrapped up in those five boxes."

"The teacher said it should be four."

"No, it was five, all right. One inside the other. That's the thing, they keep getting smaller as you go in. Naturally, any box inside another box is smaller, but the way he told it seemed to emphasize that. When you get to that inside box it sure is pretty small."

"How small?"

"Small as you can get. Anyhow, so small you couldn't expect to find any more boxes inside. The tiniest box you can imagine. I don't know, Ray, maybe your teacher would call it 'infinitely small'."

"'Infinitely'? What kind of a word is that?"

"You mean they haven't taught you that word in school yet? That's a white man's word for saying it. You can't have a smaller box, I guess. Small as you can get."

"Then how could there be anything at all in that box? You'd think a box that small would be empty. But that old man took out those two things out of which Raven made the world."

"That seemed to be the whole point to that old man. John Sky, I mean. What were those two things? I never did get that quite straight. They were not ordinary things at all, not just smaller and smaller pieces or ordinary things, like atoms or anything like that. Somehow they seemed very tiny and very big at the same time."

"They had to be big enough for Raven to bite a piece out of each."

"That's right, and they were both the same size, but they were different. Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, had to put them on the water in a certain way. I never could get that part straight."

"Sol, I was wondering something about that. Is it possible to have something so small that it doesn't have any shape at all? It doesn't have any size, it's too small, but it's still there?

Sol laughed, and was a bit surprised by his laugh. "Boy, you sure are full of questions. They say I used to be like that when I was your age. I used to wonder about crazy things like that. I'm not making fun of you, Ray. You just remind me of myself at your age."

"I was just wondering how small a thing could be."

"I don't know, Ray. Sounds to me like you're talking about nothing. Yeah, you just described a 'nothing'." Sol chuckled. "Pretty crazy idea. But I guess that's what a nothing is, a thing that's too small to exist, but it's there anyway. OK, big boy, one of those things in the box was a nothing. What was the other, another nothing? It adds up to an empty box to me. Can't make a world out of that."

The boy and the old man laughed together. The whole thing made them rock with laughter. Sol's wife looked in to see what they were up to. "Your tea's ready," she said with a smile. "Keep it warm, I'll be there in a minute," he answered.

"Raven had to bite off a piece of each, so I guess nothings would be too small for that. He had to bite them off and spit them on the water. I didn't understand that. The teacher got all mixed up when she came to that part."

"That spitting, you know, I often used to wonder about that. In a lot of the old stories someone can spit some kind of medicine on dead bones, you know, of people who have been dead a long time, and they come back to life. That's the way they bring the dead back to life in the old stories. It's as if that spitting is kind of breathing life into those bones. And Raven, that Nankilstlas-lingai, he spit those two things on the water, and made the Queen Charlotte Islands come to life. I used to wonder if that could be part of the meaning of the story."

"I think that's neat, Sol. It's as if Raven was the one who breathed life into the world by doing that biting and spitting. Is that it, Sol? It doesn't really matter what those two things were, it was what Raven did with them that brought the world to life?"

"Well, it does matter what they were. But that old man did kind of admit that the box was empty, that it would look empty to us. He said a funny thing about that. I didn't quite understand what he meant, but it was like he was trying to give me a hint or something. He said it in Haida, of course, and it's a little hard to put it in English. But it was something like 'what is absent is in pieces', or 'emptiness comes only in pieces'. Something like that."

"I wish that old man was still here to explain it, Sol."

Sol's wife came in with the tea. "You two going to be at it all night?" Ray felt he had better leave. But he didn't want to go back to school with the story left at that point. He wanted to talk some more with Sol.

"Can I come back in the morning, Sol?"

"You better go to school, Ray, your teacher would be mad."

"No, she wouldn't. She asked me to come to you. She wants to find out. She won't be mad."

"OK, Ray, come by in the morning if you like. We'll talk some more. I kind of enjoyed it."

As he walked home, Ray found himself wondering whether a raven can see the tip of its own beak. Or whether anybody can, for that matter.

IV

"Good morning, Sol. Mind if I come in?"

"Morning, Ray. You're real early."

"Mom thought I better not miss school today. She said you wouldn't mind if I came early."

"That's OK. You been thinking up some more crazy ideas?"

"Well, I was thinking about those two things in the box."

"Same here. You know, what we were talking about last night reminded me of two or three things. One of them is that once in a while those old fellows had sayings. Kind of like proverbs, you know, but not quite the same. Like the one I told you: old John Sky saying 'Nothing comes only in pieces'. It sounds nice in Haida. Another one they always used to say was 'The world is as sharp as a knife'. They sound kind of funny. They don't seem to make sense, you know, but somehow there is wisdom in them if you can only see it. And there was a funny thing they used to say about those sayings. They said they all mean the same thing. All those different sayings are really supposed to be about the same thing. That's kind of funny. I was reminded of that."

"I was thinking about those two things in the box. One of them was that tiny little nothing that was there but was too small to have any size, so the box looked empty. You know what I think the other thing was, Sol? It was all the other things in the world that were not there, so the box still looked empty. You see, if you mixed them...."

Sol's guffaw brought that line of reasoning to a halt. "You and your crazy ideas again, Ray. That's sure a crazy one." They laughed together. "But you know, Ray, that old man did say that nothing comes in pieces, so at least it's something you can have a piece of, something that Raven could have a bite of. Maybe that's how it is: you can't see nothing when it's all there, you can only recognize it when there's a little piece of it there."

Ray giggled. "What do you think a little piece of nothing looks like?"

"Well, maybe like a missing piece of something. You can't see a missing part of something, because it isn't there, but you know what it looks like anyway. You see it in your mind. Those two things in the box, Ray, those two nothings. We can't see them when they're whole, and that's why the box looks empty to our eyes, but when you bite off a piece of each it's something you can deal with..."

"And you can mix them up to form everything we can see. We can't see solid nothing and we can't see solid everything so we have to bite them in pieces and mix them so we can see them. It has to be a mixture, Sol, of pieces of things and spaces of nothing between them, or else it all looks the same, like emptiness."

"Even emptiness has to be in pieces before we can see it. Like little boxes full of emptiness. Otherwise we wouldn't recognize it. That little box had the tiniest little bit of emptiness in the whole world, so small that it wasn't hardly emptiness at all."

Ray laughed. "That's just like my little 'nothing', Sol. It was there all right, but was so small it didn't have any size at all, so it looked like emptiness."

They laughed again together.

"Sol, is that what was in the box? The presence of nothing and the absence of everything? It was really an empty box, but somehow it had a part of everything in it?"

"It seems to be just playing with words, Ray. But you know, I felt funny about that business that we can see nothing only when it is in pieces. Because how do you get the pieces? What gives them their shapes?"

"Raven bites them off..."

"No, I don't mean that. Nothing doesn't have any shapes of its own. It only gets its shapes from the things around it. If it's the shape of something missing it's still the right shape. Its only shapes are the shapes of things we know."

"Or the spaces between them."

"What I mean is, there isn't any nothing that is different from what we can see. Everything must be there all the time, but we can recognize it only a part at a time, and when we think we are seeing nothing it is really a part of what is there, but we're just not recognizing it. Nothing is there until we recognize it. Nothing isn't there until we recognize it."

Ray looked puzzled.

"Nothing is there all the time, we're just not recognizing it."

Ray still looked puzzled.

"I guess what I mean is that it isn't the box that's so important, Ray, it's the eye that is looking into the box. It can see only one thing at a time. While it's concentrating on one thing, it loses sight of the other."

"Sol, if that box is so small, maybe the eye can't even see the outside, let alone the inside. Maybe that eye can't see anything at all."

"It's pretty hard to think of an eye that hasn't got anyhing at all to look at, Ray. It can't look at itself, you know."

They contemplated the thought for a moment.

"That's kind of a funny idea, Sol. Somehow it reminds me of the eye of that half-stone lady in the fifth house."

"What it reminds me of, Ray, is Sins-sganagwai. She... It was there, shining all the time, but in a way it didn't have anything to shine on until Nankilstlas-lingai came along."

"And her brightness was the thing that first attracted him."

"That's right. It's kind of like the two of them depend on each other, give meaning to each other."

"Sol, that box. It isn't even a real box. There couldn't really be a box that small. It's just an idea of a box."

"It's only there because we agree it's there. Then we can think about it, think about the emptiness of that little box that somehow has the world in it. It doesn't really exist, but we can agree on it."

"It only exists because you and me agree on it?"

"If we didn't agree, it sure wouldn't exist. Not for us, anyway."

"There was something else I was thinking. It seemed to me that biting off a little piece of nothing was like asking a little question, and biting off a little piece of something was like giving a little answer. Was the first step in making the world to ask a little question?"

"Which is first, the little question or the big answer? I guess the little question would have to come first."

"Except remember what you said about the shapes of nothing, Sol. You can't have a question until you have something to ask it about. I think that's what part of the trouble was with that speckled stone and the black stone. They have to alternate, Sol. Maybe it didn't really matter which one was first, so long as they alternated. Maybe the meaning builds up from that."

"But it must be important which was first. That mistake of Raven's must be a more important part of the story than that."

"Well, there was one thing about that part of the story that kind of bothered me. Kind of a loose end. What happened to that extra bite of the speckled stone, the one that didn't stick, and rebounded off? Is it still flying around looking for a place to land?"

"It doesn't say, Ray. That's a question the story doesn't answer. I never thought of that one before. But there was another thing about that part that bothered me. If those two things were really made out of stone, Raven couldn't have taken bites out of them. You can't bite stone. They must have been made of something else. I sometimes used to wonder whether those two things were nothing but Nankilstlas-lingai's own finger and thumb, or something like that, and he was doing nothing but taking little bites out of himself."

They laughed. "If both of us are right, then there's a little bitten-off part of Raven still flying around looking for a place to land, Sol. We're right back where we started from." They both laughed again, a puzzled laugh. "Isn't that funny, Sol. It takes us right back to the beginning of the story. Could that be right? Could a question about the end of the story be answered by the beginning of the story?"

"The story is the answer to its own questions?"

"The whole story is about its own beginning?"

"They're both the same thing?"

"If you and me agree on it, they are. Right?"

"Yes sir. I'm with you, Chini."

"Both in the same box."

They laughed together again.

"I guess we see eye to eye on the whole thing now, Ray?"

"I guess so, and with old Mr. Sky. There was something you said about him last night that bothers me, Sol. You said you didn't know if he really believed that story of the Creation."

"It's not that he didn't believe the story. That's not what I meant. What I meant was that maybe he didn't believe it was really about the creation of the Queen Charlotte Islands."

"But what else could it be about?"

"Maybe a whole lot of things. Maybe it wasn't about anything. Maybe it was only about itself. Maybe it was about you, Ray."

"You teasing me again, Sol?"

"I guess so, Ray. It's pretty hard to think of a story that's just about itself. Every story has got to be about something else, I guess. A story can't tell itself to itself. I guess that story is about the creation of the Queen Charlotte Islands."

"That reminds me, Ray. There was one other thing I wanted to tell you about the time John Sky was telling me the story. Funny thing. It's as clear in my mind as if it was happening right today. When he got to the part where the old man says, 'I am you', you know, that part where he handed Raven those two things and said, 'I am you': he looked me straight in the eye when he said it. 'I am you'. As if he was saying that to me. It was just my imagination, but I felt kind of funny when he said that. It's only a part of the story, you know. He had to say that, because it's part of the story."

They caught each other looking at each other. They both laughed, but it was another kind of laugh: tentative, nervous, a bit forced.

"I guess I just figured that out, Sol."

"I guess I did too, Ray."

Both of them heard the Raven's Cry. They shook hands.

"So long, Mr. Sky."

"So long, Nankilstlas. Don't miss the buss."

V

Ray was late in getting to class. He had missed the school bus after all, and had hitched a ride into Charlotte. The teacher had started on a new topic, which she hadn't really wanted to do. She had hoped that Raymond would have a report to give to the class on the Creation myth. When it seemed that he was absent she felt upset, not just because of the change in her plans, but because she didn't want him, of all students, to start missing classes and getting behind. That sort of thing led to dropouts, and she didn't want that for Raymond.

Perhaps she had been a bit severe when he came in late, but she wanted him to see how strongly she felt about it. He hadn't said anything, but he did look a bit hurt.

"Did you do the assignment I gave you, Raymond?"

"No. Yes. Well, I kind of tried."

"What did your grandfather tell you?"

"He's not really my grandfather, he's . . . We all call him Chini."

"Yes, well, I understand, Raymond. Now what did he tell you about the myth? What's the significance of the five boxes and the things inside?"

Ray hesitated, then began slowly. "Well, it's kind of hard to say. Those things kind of mean nothing and everything. In a way, they mean whatever you want them to mean."

The teacher looked puzzled, then disappointed. There was a ripple of laughter in the class. "Settle down," she said, out of habit.

"Is that all, Raymond? Is that all he said? That kind of answer isn't really very helpful. It just seems to make the whole story nonsensical."

Ray could see her point. When he said these things to her, here in the classroom, they did sound nonsensical. But between him and Sol, in Sol's living room, they had sounded very sensical indeed. Why? He tried once more.

"The fifth box was infinitely small," he said.

"I suppose that's the same as being infinitesimally large, Raymond?" she answered, with a smile.

Poems by Collyne

Collyne is a young teacher in the Yukon. While studying at the University of British Columbia an extraordinary relationship grew between professor and student. The messages found in her poetry, offered here, moved Wilson very deeply. They made some of these poems together and most assuredly the effect each had upon the other is clear in these pieces. Some of the following poems are Wilson's, most are Collyne's. M.D.

SOFT RAIN

Wilson Duff

O where have you been, my blue-eyed son?
O where have you been, my darling young one?

O I've been to the place
where Collyne finds her raindrops, . . .

we went to the place
where living is sharing, . . .

we went to the place
where dying is giving, . . .

my hand in her hand,
her hand in my hand, . . .

where the rain needs to fall
because berries are ripening, . . .

where the bear's winter sleep
is the warmth of the snowdrift, . . .

where the moose swims to safety
so that the wolves can be hungry, . . .

where killing is borrowing
to share in the dying, . . .

where death is the brother
because birth is the sister, . . .

where a baby's creating
a mother and father, . . .

where a granny is dying
her gift to the baby, . . .

where Raven's still speaking
because Collyne's still listening, . . .

her hand in my hand
my hand in her hand, . . .

I was the teacher
and she was the lesson, . . .

she held out her hand
and I gave her a mirror, . . .

I held out my hand
and she gave me a raindrop, . . .

each a beginning,
both with no ending, . . .

Editorial Note: Unless indicated otherwise, all poems in this section were written by Collyne.

IS THAT STORY REALLY HAPPEN?

And we told the kids the old story,
of woman—she turn to owl,
and that other one
—where she marry the bear,
but always they asking,
all the time,
is that story really happen?

Well,
Sam and us,
I'll tell you,
we don't know what to say!

So we stay quiet,
just look,
and tell them
more
the stories.

Of crow,
how he lose eye,
eat goyaxkan, deer,
and how he make man
long ago.

And pretty soon,
they don't ask no more,
just look at us,
and listen.

We gonna tell them
more,
the old stories.
Even about that one,
fish,
who eat that man,
and woman
she rescue him—
she come and put his bones together,
and sew him new skin.

Well,
they gonna listen,
never ask
no more, that thing.
They know too,
they think about their question
like Sam and us.
And someday they're gonna tell stories.

GOD, HE KNOWS

Note: Wilson enjoyed the humour in this story. It is a transcription from one of his tapes. This final version is mainly Chinai's.

And—Father Morice he go around with dugout canoe.
And three strong boys
they go with him.

He says
he work for *God*
he work for God.
And that mountain, way south—How high?
God, He wants to know.
And lake, he measure how deep,
he says
God, He wants to know.

So poor Indian
he go with him, for free,
he didn't get paid,
because that priest, he work for God.
So, he climb up mountain,
he measure,
he says
God, He wants to know,
how high.
And lake,
he measure how deep.
He says
God, He wants to know,
how deep.

And—some Indian says,
How is that?
God,
everywhere!
Maybe God He knows
that mountain, how high,
and that lake, how deep.
God
He *knows*.

And some Indian says,
Shhhhh, don't say nothing,
don't talk like that.

He's scared. He make them scared.

UNTITLED

Raven he was making man.

Ah, he try the bark of the tree.

He made it like,

    just like,

    but it wasn't

    not like he is,

    man.

Then he use the leaves of the tree.

He made

    it was

    man.

That's why, you know, *we* like the leaves.

They fall

and the new ones they come.

That's man.

AUX HLEEKU

We will meet when the bull moose rut,
when mossberries are ripe,
when the nights come again.

I will bring you fat porcupine,
and singe it and boil it,
and grease you soft berries,
and boil you fine tea.

Hleeku,
that will be the time
where just you and me sit by the fire,
where all are just you and me.

And there
    where all cities are gone,
there
    where we feel free,
I will give you my heart
and my eyes.

We will see
    to step under the deadfall.
See
    Kusta-kha play.
And swim with the beaver,
cry out with the loon,
be one in the wind
and Yatseen-et-tlau's womb.

Aux hleeku,
I know if I just look
I'll see you this fall.

ee dutchxkun

HEY, I THINK, ARE YOU DRUNK?

I dreamed
I dreamed
Last night I dreamed . . . I'll tell you.

A lady, old lady,
you know, that lady who knows all things that's going
    to happen,
she made some firewater.

And Raven, Yelk,
he came and stole it.
He got drunk,
so drunk on that hootch,
oh, he was drunk!

And he was old in my dream, that Raven, very old.
His travelling days they were over,
maybe he was even turning back white.

And Yelk,
he looked at the way things are now:

    Ah, he saw whales in a tiny pool,
    he saw a bear with only one tree,
    he saw shamans' robes in glass cases,
    he looked even at . . . you and me.

And Yelk he was sad,
he was drunk.

I dreamed that Raven he went crazy,
crazy.
He took a basket
and started to gather things up
and put them all in the basket—somehow they were all
    fitting in.
More
and more and more and more he put.
And all what I could see
was going. . . .
And then I couldn't remember
what was gone.

And last of all
Yelk he put in his eyes
—his own eyes—
and just then I couldn't see
anything at all.

But I could hear,
and seemed to me what I could hear was:

    "Gaushot
        aux eesh
            gaushot
        aux eesh
            gaushot."
    "Take it
        my father
            take it
        my father
            take it."

That's all.
I woke up.
Kow oo shoo?
Hey, I think, are you the one that's drunk?

CHINAI HE WAS CRYING

Wilson Duff

I seen it, he was crying,
elder sister, Gwaiyai.
Chinai, he was crying,
and I don't know why.
Maybe he knew that the baby was dying. . . .

    Shhh, younger sister, Donai, Donai,
    it's not like real crying,
    old chinais don't cry.
    Just it was the wind and the dust that was flying
    into his watery eye.

But it was, he was crying,
elder sister, Gwaiyai.
It was 'cause I heard him,
and I didn't know why.
Maybe be heard about Mom and her bleeding,
maybe he knew how Collyne must be feeling. . . .

    Shhh, younger sister, Donai, Donai.
    Can't be real crying,
    old chinais don't cry.
    Just maybe he laughing, just maybe he happy,
    so clear he can see with that eye.

YAQUEXHEYGOO

(That-which-is-everything-everywhere)

Yaquexheygoo said it to Yelk.
But Raven, he just answered,

> "Well, I don't know
> why you said it to me.
> You want me to do this?
> Yes, yes, I can see what's all happening.
> I guess I could
> build a rainbow bridge,
> and make it all go back to the beginning.
> But I just don't know,
> right now,
> things are not like they used to be."

Yaquexheygoo said it to Kusta-kha.
But Otter-Man, he just answered,

> "Well, I don't know
> what I can do about it.
> I see what you want,
> but it's not like it was once.
> These days,
> if I hide a canoe
> in the treetops,
> these days,
> nobody even misses it,
> or even looks.
> I think I'll just wait."

Yaquexheygoo said it to Yatseen-et-tlau.
But Grizzly-Bear-Mother, she just laughed,

> "Eeee, there's lots I have to do right now.
> I'm busy. I do my work.
> I do my work."

Then a voice from the ground said out,
(I guess it's the one they used to call Tsoodeen)

> "Yaquexheygoo,
> Yaquexheygoo, don't say it.
> It's not supposed to be.
> I never talk to you.
> You never talk to me.
> We see, we hear, we feel,
> we know.
> We don't need that talking.

IT'S NOT SUPPOSE TO BE

One time,
there's some women,

eight them,

out berry picking.

And one them,
she slips on bear dung.

It was black and slippery,
it.
That bear—been eating berries.

So that woman,
she says bad things about it,
the bear.

> Then when they get lots the berries,
> I guess,
> it was time to go back.
>
> But the string on this woman pack,
> it keeps breaking.
>
> Over and over,
> it break.
> Her berries
> they falling all the time!
>
> Pretty soon she is crying.
>
> She telling other women,
> "Go and get my husband come to me.
> Go and get my husband."

Well, they go.

But that man
he can't find her!
Even though he go to that place!

But at where that woman was,
a man he came,
and she seeing her husband,
she thinking.

And he walks to her.
He has bear robe
over his shoulder.

Well,
she should know,
that woman,
her husband didn't have
no robe like that.
But she just didn't think,
I guess.

He tells her
come with him.

And so they walk,
walk,
long time.

And two time
they go under the deadfall.
That's what to her she think,
they deadfalls,
but they really were marten.

Each time they do that, them trees go under,
they step into a new place.
All around them is new.

So finally
they come to one place.

There's other bears,
and one them
has an old woman
with him too.

And they come to this place they gonna stay,
and they see a house there.

Well, that's what she sees it,
just like a house to her—
but it really his den.

Big house,
that one!

So she stay with him there.

And after a while,
she have two cubs,
one them a male,
and one a girl.

Well,
they look just like people,
those cubs,
only they got
fur,
them,
on backs of their hands and feet.

And so
I guess
about November,
he tells her,
"Come,
We going to another place."

Well they travel,
walk,
and stop each night some place.

But each time
it's not quite right,
that place to him.

Finally he finds good place,
and he make them a den.

Well, it's like a house to her,
and they stay there.

And she do things.
She goes get wood every day,
but always what she gets is all wet,
that wood.

Him and other bears,
they can take wood right even from water,
and just right away it's dry
to burn,
just like it had the gasoline on it.

Well,
all that time,
her seven brother
they been trying to get her back.

They walk,
look—
but they never find her.

And
one old woman,
she tell the youngest
he was going to be the one finds his sister.

So he knew this,
and he do everything
right.
He stay away from his wife in bed
and everything,
for long time—
even months, I guess.

And this youngest boy,
he had a little dog.
Well that dog,
it was like part of the woman herself.

So he start out,
that boy—
his brothers, they travel behind him.

And he goes way up,
and around
all over,
try to find his sister.

Then it was getting March about,
I guess
—March,
and the bear husband
he tells the woman
her brothers
they going to come.

"Be good to them,"
he tell her.
"Don't hold it in your heart against them."

And he telling her this
other times,
too.

And one time
well, he wants
to know the weather outside,

so he open the door,
and he put his arm out little bit.

Well,
it's snowing,
and the snow it fall off his arm,
and it goes into a little ball,
and it rolling down the hill.

And,
well,
it come to that dog.

So then,
he smelling it,
and he bark,
bark,
he track that what he smell,
and the brothers,
they follow.

Inside,
the bear husband
he sitting at the table with that his wife.

He feels that all what is coming—
what is all going happen.

He feel it three times
inside his self.

Each time he feel it,
he put it out his heart,
make it go away.

But the fourth time
it come again,
and he take it,
he break it in two,
and one it go into his head and
other,
well he knows!

And he tell her,
that his wife,

"Be good to them.
They coming now, your brothers.

Don't hold it in your heart against them.

You can eat my meat,
you can use me,
but always you take care my skin.

Never fool or play with my skin."

Then he tell her,
he say,

"If you live with you people four years,
then everything,
it's going to be alright.

But if something happen before that,
four years,
then
you
gonna come back to me."

Well,
then they hear that dog barking,
and the brothers,
they following.

They come
and,
I guess
they kill him.

And they take her,
her children back with them
and the skin
they take it back too.

Well,
it's all okay for sometime,
everything good,

But in that the second year,
the brothers
they asking her,
"Let's play with that skin.
Let's play.
You put it on."

And she tell them,
just like this,
she say,
"No.
How can I?
It's not suppose to be."

And again and again,
they tell her
same way!

And the fourth time
she did it.

She put on that her skin.
And just then,
she went back,
she change into a bear
—her kids too.

And her brothers,
well
all they got was wooden bows and arrows
—for play, the ones they got—
except the youngest.

Well,
she kill them,
right down from the oldest on.

And when there were only two them left,
her brother he shoot at her.

Only it's him,
having the real weapons.

And then
only him he was alive.

And then
she and her cubs,
they go
—gone away!

Maybe even they killed too,
them.

I don't know which.

SALMON COMING

Just look at the wind
on that lake,
the waves it's making.

You know
I think
the salmon
they talked to that wind.

They must be
on their way,
the salmon.
That's what
the wind
and the water
they know.

UNTITLED

Yesterday,
my hand held
the beauty of the world,
Mother of Raven, living in carved argillite.
She showed me that there could be
love
and freedom
and laughter
and life that is good
and beauty, even in a city
of sculptured gardens.

Tomorrow,
Mother of Raven,
my hand will hold
something I can't now see.
I'll watch the wind
blowing the northern summer into fall
and laughter into life-dreams
and childhood into age. . . .

She will help me find my argillite.
She will show me how I am to carve.

A RAVEN STORY

Long time ago
there was not much food.
Just poor—
all over
And Raven and his wife
they eating
Ah, too much food,
too much food
his wife's got.
So Raven he took some that food
and threw it.
It went all over.
That's why we got food all around today.
That's Raven.

HU, HU

Ah
that Raven,
he was looking for to eat,
you know,
and he's suppose to watch for boats come by,
from the ocean.
He's suppose to stop them,
those boats
by that river where he was.

So that Raven,
he see these berries
—blueberries,
and he thinks,
"Well,
I'm not *always*
going to watch.
I have to eat
too."
So he takes out his eye,
that Raven,
and he put it up on a little hill.
He tells it,
"Watch now,
for the boat.
You gonna *tell* me
when the boat's coming."

So he go back,
eat,
he eat....
Pretty soon that his eye calls out,
"I see a boat.
I see a boat."
He run up there,
he look,
look all over.
Only he sees a piece of driftwood.
'Oh,"
his eye says,
"That's only driftwood.
I thought it was *boat.*"

So Raven,
he goes back,
he eat....
Pretty soon his eye calls out,
"I see a boat,
I see a boat,"
He go up there *quick*,
that Raven.
Then all he see,
he look all over,
all he see is a seagull.
"Oh,"
his eye saying,
'I thought it was *boat.*"

That Raven now,
he's pretty tired of all that.
He go and he eat more,
eat *lots*,
eat,
eat....
He never hear from his eye long time.
Finally
he goes up,
go to check what's happen,
I guess.
And he see those boats,
way up river.
It's too late—
he just see them like specks.
They all gone by him long ago.

So he run over to his eye,
why—
it's *sleeping*!
And Raven,
he picks up his eye
and he bites it.
And that his eye,
it *his*,
it crying,
"Hu,
hu,
Hu, hu."
That's "ouch, ouch."
It's hurting himself,
that's his biting.

I GONNA GO FOR AWHILE BUT GONNA COME BACK NOT TOO LONG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

My grandparents, parents, me and my grandchildren—we are all the same.

When you see that raven,
he walking or come near you,
you gonna to know,
  my mother,
that's me.

When you hear the river lap,
and taste the beaver stick,
you gonna to know,
  my father,
that I'm there.

And granny,
go your way careful.
I have what you give
with me
always.
I have it
and give back.

THESE DAY

Wilson and I both worked on the poem to get it in this version.

I see winter.
He coming to us now, you know.
He planning on staying little while,
that winter.

    You see him?
    Look up there,
    in sky.
    You gonna see him shiver,
    shake his breath out,
    stretch lights up there.

I know winter.
He freeze the river now.
It turn slippery on the rocks,
the night.
That boat,
we got to get help
haul it up.

    Winter, he
    building himself big beaver house,
    storing himself deep water,
    eating lots the fat.

You remember spring?
The cranes, way up,
you just hear them,
just see speck of white
they come.

    Ah, but winter
    all what I hear these day.
    He saying it to me
    in the moose grunt,
    in the tree sap crack.
    That's cold air
    all I breathe now.
    When the sun come out
    I face it for the warm.

GRANNY SWIM TO THE SNOW

Cow moose
she knows—
she swim to the island
heavy with calf
in spring.
She know no wolf he gonna swim
to that island.

Black bear
he knows,
he fixing place to sleep.
He know when—
same time all bear
they sleep.
He know the snow he's going stay
on hillside.

Granny
she knows
she
dying.
She knows the time will come,
and not too long they going look
and see old granny
watching them.
They going speak
and hear old granny
talking them.

And me
I know
our ways,
these ways we do,
are all as breath
from cow to wolf
from bear to snow
from granny talking to—
they are as wind
from wolf to cow,
from snow to bear,
from granny watching to—
these ways we do.

SECRETS

Leaves have serious secrets.

They tell the wind
to make
a stormy wind
tonight.

Leaves think they are pretty.

They might have the secret
they are going to fall off soon,
but their secret might be
that they
can change colour
anytime.

A river has a secret—

how to wave at people.

And rivers might have made the water cold so that no one
would bother them,
or,
I know!
they may never try to let anyone drown at all.

And they know
how many fish.

In fact,
a river might be far away,
and not let no one know.

But one time
the river saw a wind
talk to him.

Stars share designs.

They whisper their secrets
to themself,
and,
stars,
they will never let anyone touch them.

Stars share night,
and whisper to the sky
their secret:
how they got there.

Stars,
their secrets shine on the moon.

They wish not to let no one see them come out at night.

But sometime
they might whisper to
me.

AND GRAMPA, HE SAY "COME IN"

That time
the old crow,
he come,
he knocking at a house.
"I hear what you have in here,"
he saying.
And the people there,
they say,
"Oh no, it's next house you want. Leave us now."
So crow,
he goes to next house.
He knock,
and he say,
"I hear what you have in here."
And all the house go quiet.
Finally they say,
"Oh, next house,
next house."
And crow,
he go to that next house.
"I hear you got something in here,"
he say.
"Can I see it?"
"Ah," from the people,
not looking at him.
"That's next house for sure you want."
So then that crow,
he go next one,
he knock.
"I hear what you have in here,
I come to see it."
And grampa,
he say,
"Come in."

So crow,
he prance in there,
and where he stop
he turn his head slow,
slow . . .
past you, hleeku, he go,
past Jeannie,
Jimmy
and
stop.
He look at grampa,
and grampa,
he looks him back.

And that one,
grampa,
quick
he gives.
And that one,
crow,
quick
he takes.
And fly away with.

And the people they asking,
"Was crow he missing eye? No . . .
. . . his beak?
Was crow he missing
—how come he take the old one that way?
Was crow he pretend he's alive?"

And hleeku, tears falling,
she say,
"That's raven,
he come
old grampa at last.
I gonna hear grampa must be different way now,
see him 'nother way.
But even
I cry for him lots."

HUSH, LITTLE BABY, DON'T YOU CRY,...

Wilson Duff

Give it back.
Hand it all back.
The whole blessed gift.
The entire measure of your worth.

Share.
Atone.
Love the sadness of the parting.

Show your gratitude,
as the wood shows its gratitude by burning:
    you are not the cold white ash,
    you are the joy in the dancing flame,
    you are the pain in the searing heat.

Go back,
after a long year's summer.
Back,
after a long day's sunshine.
Back
to your father's house.
Back
to your mother's breast.

You have eaten yourself a fill.
You have given yourself the gift.
You have danced yourself the dance of love.
You have told yourself the tale.
You have sung yourself the lullaby:
    ...rest, rest, on mother's breast,...

Drowse,
relax your vigilance.
Trust,
show a little faith.

Go to sleep.

    ...the song I sing is not a lie,...

UNTITLED

Wilson Duff

Reach forward on the path you travel
to likenesses preceding you along the way,
and grasp the name and station that is yours.
Reach backward to the likenesses that follow,
and hand the same identity to them.
The mask that passes on from hand to living hand
wears a visage of immortality.

Honour the opposites who walk beside you,
endow them with your honour and your worth,
for they are your mirror.
Honour your father, your aunt, your wife, your brother-in-law,
for they are your outer shell,
and must always be kept in a warm, dry place.
Honour your son,
for he is your next father.

Accept the cold, sharp knife of the world,
for death is the step over the threshold
back into life.

Poems by Phyllis Webb

Phyllis Webb
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IMPERFECT SESTINA

Reprinted from *Canadian Forum*, Toronto
December 1979, January 1980

I

So what if Lowry got spooked by sea-birds and volcanoes crossing,
his alter-ego stood beside him in the double mirror,
showed him Eden and flapped off darkest Raven,
who, cawing, took her mask and showed his twin.
Who can survive that mad illumination,
shining in eyes, pouring over the stone.

II

We who have dreamt our demons into stone,
caught at our groins, screamed and fell at the crossing,
find mercy and loving-beholding illumination.
Hide the mirrors. Break them. There are more mirrors.
See how the crucial stork rides off with its twin.
Over the world the Paraclete, the holy Raven.

III

Mind you, there may be more to a bird than its name Raven.
I have often wondered about a rhyme with stone.
There is a nest and there is nesting and something about the birthday of a twin.
I have seen both open and closed eyes at the double crossing,
and even as I lay there dying I saw the mirror.
Shall you or I smash out that multiple illumination?

IV

Oh yes, Death came, and oh yes there was illumination.
Death sang a song, one grand delusion of Raven
got up in feathers and a mask of stone.
Now give me back that mirror, give me the mirror,
and I will show the path and why it is a crossing.
And you and I shall lie there buying illumination.

V

Did I say buying illumination? Illumination,
twin beat beat of flinty wings, one-eyed illumination?
Can I really say I found even two cents at the crossing?
There I was stabbed and pecked by spirit Raven.
There in that marriage I turned into stone,
and did not understand he carved me at his mirror.

VI

Six times six I multiplied the vision by the mirror.
Now any mask can show me all those twins.
Loving-beholding and mercy pecked upon a stone
until the moon came down and said, "Illumination."
The pool stood still, but I think earth hovered under Raven,
and on the path the signs of love and crossing.

VII

Laughing and crying, twin meets at the crossing twin.
They do not ask the mirror. Gold licks of illumination.
Eden smells of cedar. Raven holds his wings and sucks his stone.

WILSON'S BOWL

Reprinted from *Island*, Lantzville

This is not a bowl you drink from
not a loving cup.
This is meditation's place
cold rapture's.
Moon floats here
belly, mouth, open-one-eye
any orifice
comes to nothing
dark as any mask
or light, more light/is
Holy *cercle*.
Serene, it says silence
in small fish
and cups a sun
holds its shape
upon the sea
howls, "spirit entered
black as any raven"
smiles—
and cracks your smile.
Is clean.

Epilogue: The Eulogy Given at Wilson Duff's Memorial Service

AUGUST 31, 1976

K. O. L. Burridge
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

We are gathered here together in this museum this morning to remember and do honour to Wilson Duff: friend, colleague and inspiration.

As far as I know, Wilson did not subscribe to any organized faith or religion and, appropriately I hope, this is a secular gathering.

Still, because of his lifelong singular pursuit of the truth of things, Wilson, as I see him, was an essentially religious person. He saw that there was more to life and being than the roles and passions so obviously displayed before us. But the fact and the pain of death causes us all to re-evaluate ourselves and our relationships with each other. Indeed, the pain and fact of death stand at the centre of all organized faiths. No one who seeks the truth of things can avoid looking death in the face. Wilson did so, and he made his own terms.

Now in the tradition in which I was reared, the death of one in the community diminishes all. That is how one ultimately defines community. And death wins. Unless, that is, its pain and our diminution are transformed into, equated with and recognized as also birth pangs.

And that is perhaps what is asked of us now: that we renew ourselves in Wilson's virtues, that we supply for ourselves what we think he thought we lacked, that in losing him we gain his aspirations.

I found in Wilson's office beside his desk where he might glance at it from time to time, a note pinned to the wall. It was from a friend of his, a young Indian girl, and I'd like to read it to you:

> "I was just thinking about the old people's recognizing themselves in others after their own death. Their essence, or what-is-them-after-death, is still part of the nature spirit (what-is-everything-everywhere). So after they die they can see and hear and have power through what always exists. Yakwexheygoo, animal's spirits see and hear and are part of this. So what-is-them-after-death is with Yakwexheygoo and with all nature and even in the trees and the wind and recognizes (seeing, hearing, being there and by being part of) what-is-them-after-death-in-another-person . . . Dead persons are a part of this everything and are recognizing themselves in living people. So living people recognize that the ones who are dead can see and hear and recognize themselves and recognize that the living recognize . . ."

Here the note comes to an end.

As we remember Wilson Duff and the paradox that was his life—and indeed all our lives—in the centre of his own studies, some will be thinking of a specific memorial to him.

Let it come, because come it will.

In the meanwhile, Wilson's memorial is all around us. In this museum, in the Centennial Museum, in the Provincial Museum, in other museums around the province. It is there in what he wrote, in what his students have written and are writing.

Looking around and reading, we can surely recognize Wilson recognizing us. We can pursue the truth of things where he left off. So, perhaps, we may feel the pain of death to the full, overcome it, and defeat it.

Acknowledgements

The efforts of many people went into making this anthology. Thanks must go first of all to the several contributors—artists and authors—whose work makes up this volume. Equal thanks are due to a number of other friends of Wilson Duff who offered excellent contributions which, because of length or too great divergence from the themes of this book or duplication, could regretfully not be included. Funding for the publication was provided by the Donor's Fund of the Friends of the British Columbia Provincial Museum. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the "Friends," to the several donors to the fund, to its administrator, R. Y. Edwards, Director of the Provincial Museum, and also to Frederica de Laguna, Viola Garfield, and Donald Rosenbloom who made specific financial donations in support of this book.

My deep gratitude goes to my colleagues on the Editorial Committee for this volume, Marnie Duff, Marjorie Halpin, Robin Ridington, and Hilary Stewart, and also to Harold Hosford, the Provincial Museum's Publications Editor, for the great effort each of them put into it. In addition to their many hours of plain hard work I am indebted to them for their insights, creative ideas, and simply for setting me straight on many occasions. It has been a joy to work with them.

An especially fond acknowledgement is due to other members of Wilson Duff's family, Marian and Tom Duff, and Mrs. Win Chalke for their help and support.

A great deal of assistance was rendered by fellow staff members of the Provincial Museum, notably Alan Hoover, Peter Macnair, Andrew Niemann, Dan Savard, Burton Storey and John Veillette of the Ethnology Division and Walter Bishop, Jim Haggarty, Tom Loy and Bob Powell of the Archaeology Division. I must single out Liz Virolainen of Ethnology and Dave Hutchcroft of Archaeology for hours spent helping me find photographs, Elaine Patterson of Archaeology for miles of typing, and especially Nancy Condrashoff of Archaeology who drew many of the illustrations, as often as not on a last minute rush basis. My sincere thanks to all of them.

So many others helped, in so many different ways, with the development and preparation of this volume that it is impossible to single them all out for the individual recognition many of them deserve. However inadequately this is expressed, I hope the following will recognize that I am indeed indebted to them for their good will and assistance: David Aberle, Michael Ames, Daphne Begg, Cyril Belshaw, Randy Bouchard, Hon. Frank Calder, Brad Campbell, Canadian Native Prints, Katherine Capes, Roy Carlson, Ann Cowan, Richard Daugherty, Susan Thomas Davidson, Harry Dyler, William Elmendorf, Knut Fladmark, Robin Fisher, Harry Hawthorn, Sumi Imamoto, Richard Inglis, the late Willard Ireland, Carol Jopling, Do Kennedy, Barbara Lane, Robert Lane, Coral Stenmark Loy, Natalie MacFarland, Tom McFeat, Bill McLennan, Lynn Maranda, Daphne Marlatt, G. A. Mintz, Marjorie Mitchell, Leslie Moore, G. E. Mortimore, Douglas Osborne, James Pendergast, Margaret E. Prang, John Pritchard, Verne Ray, Helene Renaud, Antonia Ridington, Madeline Bronsdon Rowan, David Ryus, Polly Sargent, Audrey Shane, R. Michael Shields, Richard Simmins, Bjorn Simonsen, Wayne Suttles, William E. Taylor, Jr., Robert Tyhurst, and Janice Whitehead.

Finally, our thanks to the several institutions and individuals who gave permission to reprint or preprint articles, who allowed us to use, and in some cases supplied, their photographs and other illustrations, and who permitted objects in their collections to be illustrated. Where known, appropriate acknowledgements are made in the text. Despite every effort, the origins of some illustrations still could not be determined at the time of going to press. We ask the indulgence of owners and copyright holders in these cases as we would have sought their agreement and given them full credit if we could.

D.N.A.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL